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PANTHEISM

VOL. II.

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GENERAL SKETCH

OF THE

HISTORY OF PANTHEISM

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II.

From the AGE OF SPINOZA to the COMMENCEMENT OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

by C. E. Plumptre

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'And what if all of animated nature
Be but organic harps diversely framed
That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweep
Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze
At once the soul of each and God of all?'—COLERIDGE

7. a. 36

LONDON
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BOOK THE THIRD—continued

MODERN PANTHEISM

CHAPTER VI.

SPINOZA.

THE few scattered allusions to the persecuting spirit of Christianity made in the first two chapters of this third book of our sketch, taken in combination with the somewhat detailed account of the cruel deaths of Servetus, Bruno, and Vanini, related in the three succeeding chapters, must have sufficiently indicated to the reader that it was at their peril that Pantheists, or indeed philosophers of any description, ventured to make themselves heard. The wonder was, not that men like Servetus or Vanini should have momentarily yielded to the temptation of denial or equivocation, but that the love of knowledge should have been sufficiently strong to render them courageous enough to prosecute it at all.

It is difficult, without unnecessarily harrowing the feelings of the reader, to enter into any detailed account of the miseries inflicted by this spirit of persecution. Still more difficult is it to try and comprehend how this spirit should have arisen when its authors were acknowledged disciples of One who had declared that the test of discipleship lay in the love one disciple bore to another. In the first century the conduct of the Christians was so conspicuous for its intense tenderness and humanity as to draw from the mouths of admiring heathens the expression, 'See how these Christians love one another!' In the fourth century it was equally conspicuous for such hardness and inhumanity as to elicit the ejaculation, 'There are no

wild beasts so ferocious as Christians who differ concerning their faith.' For the strange thing about this spirit of persecution was, that it was chiefly excited by the most trivial divergence, the most puerile differences, in doctrinal opinion. Heresy in Christians was far more bitterly resented by their fellow Christians than were the religious opinions of alien nations. The Homoousians and Homoiosians were each of them perfectly certain that the other must be eternally damned, and regulated their conduct accordingly. Yet it was not till the twelfth century that this spirit of persecution grew to be completely organised into a thorough system of finished refinement of cruelty. Llorente, who had free access to the archives of the Spanish Inquisition, assures us that by that tribunal alone more than 31,000 persons were burnt, and more then 290,000 condemned to punishments less severe than death. The number of those who were put to death for their religion in the Netherlands alone, in the reign of Charles V., has been estimated by a very high authority at 50,000,[1] and at least half as many perished under his son. It would be difficult to say whether supposed witches or supposed heretics furnished the most victims to the insensate rage of their persecutors. And although, no doubt, the ultimate effect of the Reformation was to stamp out, and denounce with horror, the atrocious cruelties of so-called Christianity, it was not its immediate effect. We have seen the Reformers' rage against heresy exhibited by the persistent cruelty of Calvin toward Servetus. And in like manner the Reformers' vindictiveness against witchcraft is best illustrated in the person of Luther. 'I would have no compassion on these witches,' he exclaimed; 'I would burn them all.'

The courage of philosophers like Bruno may well elicit

[1] Sarpi, 'History of Council of Trent.' Grotius says 100,000. Mr. Motley, in his 'Rise of the Dutch Republic,' says that 'three million of people, men, women, and children, were sentenced to the scaffold in three lines.' All these facts are quoted by Mr. Lecky in his 'History of Rationalism in Europe,' vol. ii. p. 33.

not only our admiration but astonishment, disclosing itself as it did in the barbarous period of the sixteenth century. Yet when philosophers appear, less endowed with nerves of iron, and consequently more cautious and timid, we must not condemn or despise them, remembering how exceptional must be the courage that could brave death by the fire. On the contrary, we must be grateful that they had sufficient temerity to prosecute at all, even though timidly, the pursuits of science or philosophy.

In the category of these somewhat timid philosophers must be reckoned René Descartes, the 'Father of the Experimental Philosophy of the Human Mind,' as Dugald Stewart has called him. From motives either of conviction or of fear, Descartes avowed himself a good churchman. There have not been wanting critics who have endeavoured to discover some traces of Pantheism in the doctrines of Descartes, though not successfully so in our opinion. The Catholicism of those days bore too great a resemblance to Polytheism, to render it possible for a good Catholic to have anything of Pantheism in his tenets. But quite apart from his religious confessions, which may have been merely the product of timidity, we do not think that, philosophically speaking, Descartes is to be reckoned amongst the Pantheists. The fundamental quality in Pantheism is a belief in Unity of Substance, or, as it is technically called, Monism. Descartes rejected Monism and adopted Dualism. He represented body and spirit as constituting a dualism of perfectly heterogeneous entities, separated in nature by an absolute and unfilled interval. Nevertheless, this dualism of Descartes grew directly into the somewhat mystical Pantheism of Malebranche, and indirectly led the way to the pure Monism of Spinoza, although that philosopher was so radically original in his mode of thinking that it may well be questioned whether he would not have been equally great had he not been preceded by Descartes.

'It is not often that any man in this world lives a life so well worth writing as Spinoza lived,' says Mr. Froude; 'and this, not for striking incidents or large events connected with it, but because he was one of the very best men these modern times have seen.'

Notwithstanding this verdict—a verdict from which few students of Spinoza will be inclined to dissent—it is a somewhat noteworthy fact that until the present century the life and writings of Spinoza were to the general reader almost closed books. Just now, however, when the greater part of cultivated Europe has been celebrating the second centenary of this celebrated man, his name has become unusually prominent, and there has been scarcely one of our higher periodicals which has not endeavoured to afford its readers some slight acquaintance with the life of one who (to quote Mr. Froude again) 'taught this lesson equally by example and by word: that wherever there is genuine and thorough love for Good and Goodness, no speculative superstructure of opinion can be so extravagant as to forfeit those graces which are promised, not to clearness of intellect but to purity of heart.'

In a treatise of this description the philosophy of Spinoza is of overwhelming interest. For he is eminently the most striking figure, the most prominent example, modern Pantheism has as yet presented. Servetus and Vanini, and, still more pointedly, Bruno, were all pioneers of Spinoza, yet they were not Spinoza himself. There was an immense gulf between the speculative hypotheses of these three, and the logical demonstration of the Jew of Amsterdam. His geometrical axioms were so plainly set forth, his method of demonstration was so wonderfully clear, that it is somewhat difficult to understand how there should have arisen such a divergence of opinion as to the worth or worthlessness of his doctrines. His life was so noble and lofty, his character so tender and unselfish, that it is not easy to comprehend whence arose the vindictiveness and

dislike with which he has been regarded by so many of his critics. Few men have elicited such a variety of opinions as Benedict Spinoza; few have been so completely misunderstood or misrepresented. As Mr. Lewes has well pointed out, 'the man whom the pious Malebranche could denounce as a wretch (*misérable*), the no less pious Schleiermacher [1] could invoke as a saint. He whom the sceptic Bayle has called a systematic atheist, has been called by the Catholic Novalis a 'God-intoxicated man.'

If we were forced to make a selection between these opinions, we should certainly choose the latter. 'God-intoxicated' is one of those happily coined phrases which is singularly appropriate and felicitous in its meaning. If the character of Spinoza had been less tolerant and charitable, he might have fairly earned the appellation of 'fanatic'; he had all the earnestness and enthusiasm of fanaticism, but without any of the bigotry and somewhat repulsive features one is apt to associate with the name. 'Intoxicated' is a far better word; he was pervaded, filled to overflowing, so to speak, with the consciousness of a God. God was literally to him, the be-all and end-all of existence, the ground and root of all being. He has been called in consequence a believer in Pantheism, which in the minds of the vulgar is generally identified with Atheism, forgetful that in reality Pantheism and Atheism have precisely the same unlikeness one with the other as have a thing and its opposite. For Atheism disbelieves wholly in God and beholds him in no place and under no aspect. Pantheism, on the contrary, beholds him in every place and

[1] 'Offer reverentially with me a lock to the Manes of the holy, rejected Spinoza,' says Schleiermacher. 'He was filled with the lofty world-spirit; the infinite was his beginning and his end; the universe his only and eternal love. In holy innocence and deep humility he saw himself in the mirror of the eternal world; and saw, too, how he was its most lovely mirror; full of religion was he and full of holy spirit; and hence he stands there alone and unrivalled, master in his art, but exalted above the profane guild, without disciples and without civil right.' Quoted by Ueberweg, in his 'History of Philosophy,' vol. ii. pp. 249–250.

under every aspect. The two systems therefore are widely apart, and under no circumstances should they be confounded one with the other.

We have thought it right, before proceeding with a detailed account of his life, to enter thus slightly into the religious opinions of Spinoza. For unless the reader possess an accurate idea of the strong religious element pervading Spinoza's character, he will never be able to comprehend either the life or the writings. Religious fervour formed the pervading characteristic of Spinoza. It was the key-note, so to speak, of his life, of his sayings and doings and writings. It was this which earned him the not unfair accusation of Pantheism. It was this which won for him the far more appropriate designation of 'God-intoxicated.'

Baruch Despinosa, or Benedictus de Spinoza, as he seems indifferently to have called himself, was born at Amsterdam on November 24, 1632, about six-and-thirty years after the birth of the celebrated Descartes, for whom he had a great, though not unquestioning admiration. One of the earliest of Spinoza's works was devoted to the consideration of the Cartesian philosophy, and was entitled 'A Geometrical Demonstration of the Principles of Descartes.'

The latter portion of the sixteenth century, and the whole of the seventeenth, formed together a period when men's minds seemed to be taking a grand intellectual stride. In science, in philosophy, in politics, in religion, there was a sort of restlessness, an uneasy seething, a longing and determination to escape from the trammels of ignorance and bigotry. The movement had begun almost with the sixteenth century; but through the nearly absolute power of the Church seemed likely to be extinguished as soon as it had begun to show itself in any marked degree. On February 17, 1600, as we related in the last volume, Giordano Bruno, after a six years' imprisonment, had to expiate by a death through burning the crime of teaching that the earth moved round the sun, and that there was an infinity of

worlds. Not many years afterwards, the aged Galileo, guilty of the same offence, was arrayed in penitential garb, and forced on his knees to recant his errors, or he too might have lost his life through burning. But the opinions of the Reformation were slowly yet surely making their way. In many countries the Church was gradually losing her paramount authority. And though, as regards each other, Catholicism and Protestantism seem to have been equally intolerant, there appears to be little doubt that Protestantism was less bitter against scientific discoveries than was the Roman Catholic Church. Harvey, and afterwards Newton, met with little other than honourable treatment in England. Even Descartes, living as he did in the earlier, and therefore more intolerant, half of the seventeenth century, met with fitting acknowledgment of his talents both in Holland and Sweden. He received a good deal of persecution, it is true, from individuals of the Reformed Church, such, for instance, as the theologian Gisbert Voet. Yet that persecution was far less terrible than it would have been if he had lived in the days prior to the Reformation. His life was never positively in danger, as would have been the case had he lived in the preceding century.

Both the parents of Spinoza were descendants of Portuguese Jews who had sought refuge in Holland from the cruelties of the Inquisition. His father was an honourable but not very wealthy merchant, whose family consisted of Spinoza and two daughters, Miriam and Rebecca. Spinoza seems to have been destined from his earliest childhood for a theological career, and his father directed his education accordingly. His precocity was so great that he soon attracted the attention of the great Talmudist, Saul Levi Morteira, who is said to have taken more than usual pains in aiding and superintending his education; hoping, doubtless, he might one day be rewarded by seeing his pupil assume a leading position among the chief Rabbis of Israel

But the age, as we have said, was one of Doubt. The

schism in the Christian Church had indirectly made itself, felt by Churches that were not Christian; scientific discoveries that had given a shock to Christian orthodoxy were likely to prove equally repugnant to the orthodoxy of other denominations. Spinoza, intelligent, eager, almost greedy in his desire for knowledge, at first delighted his master with his avidity for learning, with the wonderful precocity of his questions, with the clearness and intelligence of his answers. But the time was to come when Morteira was to be bitterly mortified and disappointed in his pupil. The young boy Spinoza had been content with asking questions and gratefully accepting the solution. The youth Spinoza was not so credulous. He would one day ask for an explanation of some difficulty, and another day for an explanation of perhaps a greater difficulty. And if, as was not unfrequently the case, the solution of to-day contradicted the solution of yesterday, he did not scruple to express his dissatisfaction. He was by nature of a severely logical turn of mind, and in after life was passionately attached to the higher mathematics and geometry. He could no more accept a contradiction in terms than he could believe that two and three added together were capable of producing any other number than five; or that a thing could be and yet not be at one and the same time. Religious difficulties seemed to increase upon him. At times he openly expressed his dissent. Morteira grew alarmed, dissatisfied, and at last remonstrated with him. It was in vain, however, Spinoza declared his doubts had met with no satisfactory solution; that he must in consequence throw up all idea of theology as a profession, for his conscience would not allow of him teaching tenets and dogmas of which he himself did not believe a single word. His father was pained and offended beyond measure. The Jewish Synagogue of those days held a somewhat similar position with the Christian Church of our own day. It served as a passport to a certain social position; the emolument was

at all events sufficient to provide the necessaries of life; and at the same time it afforded a decided scope for men of exceptional talent. The father had hoped such great things of this only son. He was endowed with but little wealth, and if Benedict would persist in his refusal of adopting theology as his profession, it seemed as if all the money and pains that had been spent upon his education had been thrown away. Tears and reproaches had no effect, however. Spinoza rigidly adhered to his resolution not to teach tenets he believed to be false. As time went on, it was noticed that he presented himself less and less frequently at the Synagogue. Rumours were becoming disseminated about him. His father's house was regarded with more or less of suspicion. At last a bribe was offered to him of one thousand florins annually, on condition of his appearing at stated intervals and at proper times at the Synagogue. The bribe was refused with indignation, and Spinoza openly expressed his pain at being thought capable of being bribed into doing what he believed to be a dishonest action. Shortly afterwards his life was attempted by some fanatic, who probably thought he would be doing the Synagogue a service if he could remove such a heretic out of the way. The knife missed its aim; it only tore his coat and slightly grazed his skin. The torn coat was preserved by Spinoza as a memento of religious amenity. Bribes, threats, reproaches, all had failed; there was nothing else for it then; he must be expelled from his father's house, and excommunicated from the Jewish Synagogue. And this was the form of the excommunication, as given in Mr. Lewes's 'History of Philosophy,' which we have only very slightly condensed.

'According to what has been decreed in the Council of Angels, and definitely determined in the Assembly of Saints, we reject and banish and declare him to be cursed and excommunicated, agreeable to the will of God and the Congregation, by virtue of the Book of the Law, and of the

six hundred and thirteen Precepts contained therein. We pronounce the same interdiction used by Joshua with respect to the city of Jericho; the same curse wherewith Elisha cursed those wanton and insolent children, as well as his servant Gehazi. The same anathema used by Barak with respect to Meros; the same excommunication used anciently by the members of the Great Council; and which Jehuda the son of Ezekiel did likewise thunder against his servant, and with all the curses, anathemas, interdictions, and excommunications which have been fulminated from the time of Moses, our master, to the present day, in the name of *Achthariel*, who is also called *Jah*, the Lord of Hosts; in the name of the great prince *Michael*; in the name of *Metateron*; in the name of *Sandalphon*; lastly in that name which contains forty-two letters—namely, in the name of Him who appeared to Moses in the bush; in the name of Him who said, *I am that I am and who shall be*; by the mysterious depths of the great Name; by His Holy Commandments engraved upon the two Tables of the Law. Let him be cursed by the Lord God of Hosts, who sits above the cherubim, whose holy and dreadful name was pronounced by the high-priest in the great day of atonement. Let him be cursed in heaven and earth by the very mouth of the Almighty God. Let him be cursed in the name of the great prince Michael, in the name of Metateron whose name is like that of his Master. Let him be cursed in the name of Achthariel Jah, the Lord of Hosts, cursed by the mouth of the Seraphim and Ofanim and those ministering angels who minister in the presence of God to serve Him in all purity and holiness.

'Was he born in *Nisan* (March), a month the direction of which is assigned to Uriel, and to the angels of his company, let him be cursed by the mouth of Uriel, and by the mouth of the angels whereof he is the head.

'Was he born in *Ijar* (April), a month the direction of

which is assigned to *Zephaniel* and to the angels of his company, let him be cursed by the mouth of Zephaniel, and by the mouth of the angels whereof he is the head. [Then follows a similar form of curse for every month in the year.]

'Let him be cursed by the mouth of the Seven Angels who preside over the seven days of the week. Let him be cursed by the Four Angels who preside over the four seasons of the year. Let him be cursed by the mouth of the seven principalities. Let him be cursed by the mouth of the princes of the Law, whose name is Crown and Seal. Let him be cursed by the mouth of the strong, powerful, and dreadful God.

'We beseech the great God to confound such a man, and to hasten the day of his destruction. O God, the God of spirits, depress him under all flesh, extirpate, destroy, exterminate, and annihilate him. The ire of the Lord, the most contagious storms and winds, fall upon the head of impious men; the exterminating angels will fall upon them. Cursed be he wherever he turn; his soul shall go out from him in terror. His death shall be in dire sickness; his spirit shall not pass out and away. God send the sharpest and most violent evils upon him. Let him perish by a burning fever, by a consumption, being dried up by fire within and covered with leprosy and imposthumes without. Let God pursue him till he be entirely rooted out and destroyed; until his own sword shall be pierced through his own breast and his bow shall be broken. He will be like the straw which shall be scattered about by the wind. Oppression and anguish will seize on him. He will drink the cup of the indignation of the Almighty God, whose curses will cover him as his garments. The strength of his skin shall be devoured. The earth will swallow him up. Let God never forgive him his sins. Let all the curses contained in the Book of the Law fall upon him. Let God blot him out from under

the heavens. Let God separate him to his own destruction from all the tribes of Israel, and give him for his lot all the curses contained in the Book of the Law.

'As for you who are still living, serve the Lord your God. May it please the great God to shower his blessings upon this whole assembly, and upon all other holy assemblies, and the members thereof, except those that trespass over this anathema. God keep them under his holy protection. God preserve them in his great mercy, and bless and prosper all their undertakings. Lastly, may the great God shortly grant them that Deliverance which they with all the brethren of Israel expect: and be this His Gracious Will. Amen.'

It is said that Spinoza, when informed of his excommunication—for he was not present to hear it read—merely replied: 'Well and good; but this will force me to nothing I should not have been ready to do without it.'

Banished from his father's home and excommunicated from the Church of his people, how and where should he find subsistence; to whom should he turn for affection and sympathy? Living at that time in Amsterdam was a very learned man—Francis Van Den Ende by name—who was a physician and philologist; and whom in after years neither Leibnitz nor Arnauld thought it beneath them to visit. This Van den Ende kept an educational establishment; and it was from him that Spinoza had learnt Latin, and probably also philosophy, anatomy, and physiology. On hearing of his dismissal and disgrace from his family, Van den Ende offered Spinoza the place of teacher and assistant in his school, which position was gratefully accepted by him.

It was his sojourn here which gave occasion to the only episode in Spinoza's life that can in any way be called romantic. Van den Ende had a daughter—Clara Maria by name—who was little more than twelve years old, when Spinoza, at the age of twenty-four, took up his residence in

her father's house. In spite of her extreme youth, she seems to have been treated by Van den Ende with a respect and trust rarely paid even to grown-up daughters. She was of a singularly precocious intellect, and was in the habit of teaching the younger pupils Latin; and it is even said, that in her father's absence she was left the sole mistress of the school. Naturally, she and Spinoza were thus thrown considerably into each other's society, and, as time went on, Spinoza felt himself growing somewhat attached to the budding maiden, although it is probable that her extreme youth prevented any positive words of love being spoken between them.

Meanwhile Spinoza was gradually discovering that the faculty of teaching did not lay within his province; and with the inexorable honesty characteristic of him, came to the decision that he could not conscientiously undertake duties for which he felt himself to be incompetent. He therefore resigned his position at the Van den Ende's, and left their house, although he still kept up his friendship with them and visited them frequently.

He was thus again thrown upon his own resources, and compelled to look about for some employment, and means whereby to provide for the necessities of daily life. The Jews of Holland at that period had an excellent custom (which we believe is practised in Germany at the present day), of teaching every boy some trade or handicraft, in addition to the ordinary scholastic education he would naturally receive according to the station in which he was born. The trade the young Spinoza had been taught was that of glass-polishing. And in his present extremity he bethought himself that now would be the time for him to try and see if he could not turn this more practical part of his education to some profitable account. He was modest and frugal in his habits; and he soon found that the business of glass-polishing brought him in quite a sufficient competence for his daily wants, besides leaving him enough

leisure for carrying out the great system of philosophy which he was now slowly evolving.

Meanwhile time was passing on, and the love that had been half sport, half earnest, between the young man and the child of twelve or fourteen, was fast ripening, at all events on Spinoza's part, into a more real feeling now that that child had arrived at woman's estate. He began paying her attentions that could not be mistaken; and it was evident he was only waiting for a favourable opportunity for formally demanding her hand in marriage, when his hopes were suddenly checked by a formidable and unlooked-for obstacle appearing in his way, in the person of another and a richer suitor. This suitor, who afterwards proved the successful rival—Dietrich Kerkering by name—was a wealthy Hamburg merchant, and a Protestant Christian by faith. The lady was a Papist, and refused to wed one not of her own religion. The merchant quickly conquered this obstacle by apostatizing from his own faith and coming over to hers. (Such a proceeding would have been an impossibility on Spinoza's part.) Moreover, the merchant was rich and could offer the fair one jewels, whereas the poor Spinoza had nothing but his mighty heart and intellect to lay at the lady's feet. It is seldom the feminine mind is proof against the temptation of jewelry. The presents were accepted, and the prize in consequence duly carried off by the merchant.

A good deal of romance has been made out of this episode by Spinoza's biographer, Auerbach; probably owing to the fact that Spinoza, though singularly adapted for the pleasures of domestic life, gentle in his ways to women, and very fond of children, yet always remained unmarried. And the conclusion has therefore been drawn that he could never wholly conquer his youthful attachment to Mdlle. Van den Ende. In our opinion such an inference does not necessarily follow. The cause of a man remaining unmarried quite as often lies in the difficulty of finding a

suitable partner as in any foolish indulgence in a futile regret for some youthful disappointment. In Spinoza's case that difficulty must have been more than usually great. Marriageable women for the most part may be divided into three classes: those who are frivolous, and consequently select a man merely for his looks and outward appearance; those who are worldly and ambitious, and who choose a husband for his possessions and social standing; those who are religious and conscientious, and who bestow their preference upon a man for his religious fervour and general merits. There was nothing in the outward appearance or social position of Spinoza to tempt women of the two former classes. Melancholy in his looks (though invariably cheerful in his spirits), retiring in his habits, somewhat sickly in health, what was there in him to attract the frivolous and trifling? Disgraced from his family, an outcast from his home, forced to eke out a scanty livelihood by the employment of glass-polishing, what was there in him to attract the worldly and ambitious? And his success with the nobler class of women would have been even more doubtful; for their very virtues, their very religiousness and devoutness, would make them shudder at the idea of marriage with a heretic. For women are, for the most part, intense conservatives. It is seldom the feminine mind can comprehend ideas that are in advance of its own period; and the age in which Spinoza lived was not sufficiently progressed for it to be thought possible that the nobility and holiness of a man's life, the honesty and purity of his intentions, should count for anything if his religious opinions did not happen to tally with those of his forefathers.

The difficulty of procuring a suitable partner must have been therefore with Spinoza a more than ordinary difficulty, and forms in our opinion the probable cause of his life-long bachelorhood. We can hardly imagine he would feel Mdlle. Den Ende's rejection very deeply. After the first

pang of disappointment was over, he must have awoke to the consciousness that a woman who could demand a man's apostacy from his religious conviction, or who could be won by the bribe of a necklace, was not the woman whom he would willingly select as his wife. With his fervid, tender, intensely earnest nature, Spinoza's was precisely the disposition to find marriage either a state of great happiness or great unhappiness; and it is more than probable that, instead of repining at the loss of the lady, he was more or less grateful for having been spared such an infliction. He seems to have taken his rejection very resignedly, and to have settled down not discontentedly to the idea of a celibate life. In after years, when he became famous, he was visited and sought after, it is true, by female lion-hunters as well as by male; but he had then become used to living by himself, and was, moreover, so preoccupied in working out his great system of philosophy, that he had little time to devote to thoughts of love. Too courteous and gentle to refuse admittance to visitors who had come a long distance to see him, he nevertheless confessed it often annoyed him to have to break off from work for the sake of gratifying what was very often, after all, a mere idle vulgar curiosity.

Shortly after his rejection by Mdlle. Van den Ende his father died, and his two sisters, Miriam and Rebecca, hoping they might gain possession of the portion of the property rightfully belonging to their brother, sought to keep him from his inheritance under the plausible pretext of declaring that a heretic should be denied the ordinary rights of succession. Spinoza did not care for the money, but his conscience would not permit him even to be a passive party to the performance of such a fraud on his sisters' part; so he appealed against them in a court of law, and gained his cause. Directly he knew of his success he wrote off to his sisters, begging them to accept the contested property as a free gift from himself. The qualities of justice and gene-

rosity were virtues equally balanced in his character, and only exercised a less powerful influence over him than did his deep religious fervour. Out of his scanty income he had always something to spare for those whose incomes were even more scanty than his own. And later in life, when an affectionate pupil, Simon de Vries by name, brought him a thousand florins, beseeching him to accept it as a slight payment of the debt of gratitude the pupil owed the master, Spinoza refused the offer, laughingly alleging as his reason, that so large a sum of money would turn his head. De Vries then made a will bequeathing the whole of his property to his master; on hearing of which Spinoza, remembering that De Vries had a brother, set off at once for Amsterdam, where De Vries lived, to remonstrate with his would-be benefactor, insisting that the money ought to be left to the rightful heir, and stoutly declaring that if De Vries would persist in such an act of injustice, he (Spinoza) would nevertheless not touch one farthing of it, but would restore it whole and entire to the brother exactly in the same state as he had received it. Spinoza won the day, and De Vries altered his will in his brother's favour. It is pleasant to be able to state that the brother fully appreciated Spinoza's conduct; and when the will finally came into effect, he declared he would not accept the property unless Spinoza would allow him to settle five hundred florins a year upon him. Spinoza at first refused; but, perceiving that his refusal really pained and annoyed the younger De Vries, he, after some debate, finally agreed to accept an annuity of three hundred florins.

In the year 1661, or thereabouts, Spinoza made the acquaintance of Henry Oldenburg, who had been the Hague consul in London when Cromwell was Protector, and who was afterwards secretary to the infant association spoken of by the learned Dr. Wallis, which subsequently grew into 'The Royal Society of London for the Cultivation of

Natural Knowledge.' Oldenburg was passionately attached to every branch of science; and it is probable that the cause of his first acquaintance with Spinoza lay in the fact that the Jew was now acquiring a considerable reputation for his proficiency and skill in polishing lenses. Whether such were the cause, or whether Spinoza's early work, entitled '*Principia Philosophiæ Cartesianæ More Geometrico demonstrata*,' had gained Oldenburg's admiration, the effect was undoubted. Spinoza and Oldenburg struck up a great friendship, which, directly and indirectly, beneficially influenced Spinoza's career. Whenever it was possible for Oldenburg to be in the society of Spinoza, he gladly availed himself of what he believed to be such a great privilege; whenever it was not possible, he endeavoured to compensate for the loss of his society by frequent correspondence. The correspondence between the two is so interesting, and affords us, moreover, such a clear insight into some of the opinions of Spinoza, that in the course of this chapter we shall not unfrequently quote Spinoza's letters as exponents of his doctrines, in preference to describing those doctrines in our own words.[1]

'Honoured Sir, Esteemed Friend [runs one of the earliest of the letters from Oldenburg to Spinoza],—You will judge with what regret I left you on my late visit to you in your retreat at Rhynsburg, when you see that I am scarcely arrived in England ere I seek, in so far as this may be done by writing, to feel myself in communion with you again. Your scientific attainments, added to the sweetness of disposition and refinement of manners wherewith nature and self-culture have so amply endowed you, have charms that secure you the love and esteem of all educated and

[1] Whenever I quote any of the letters between Spinoza and Oldenburg, I wish to state that I am indebted for them to Dr. Willis's interesting work, entitled 'Spinoza—his Life, Correspondence, and Ethics.'

right-minded men. Let us therefore, most excellent sir, give each other the right hand of confiding friendship, and sedulously cultivate the same by doing all in our power mutually to aid and oblige each other. All I can give from my slender stores, pray consider as your own; and suffer me, I beg in return, as this may be done without loss to you, to share the intellectual treasures in which you abound.

'At Rhynsburg we had a conversation on God, on infinite space and thought, on the agreement and differences of these attributes, on the manner of union between the human body and soul, and on the principles of the Cartesian and Baconian philosophies. But as we only touched hurriedly and in the most summary manner on subjects of such vast interest, and as my mind has been much occupied by what was then said, I now venture, on the strength of our inchoate friendship, to ask of you kindly to communicate with me more at large on the matters broached, to give me your views of them generally, and in especial to enlighten me on these two points: 1st, Wherein you make the difference between thought and extension to consist; and 2nd, What deficiencies you find in the philosophies of Descartes and of Bacon; how you would propose to amend these, or what you would substitute as something better in their stead. The more freely and fully you write to me on these matters, the more will you bind me to you—the more pledge me to services of the same sort to you, if, indeed, I have it in my power to render any.

'The account of certain physiological experiments by an English nobleman of distinguished parts and learning (the Hon. Robert Boyle) has gone to press here, and will shortly make its appearance. The subjects discussed include Fluidity, Solidity, the Constitution and Elastic Properties of the Air, &c., illustrated by some forty-three experiments. When the work comes out I shall take care to send you a copy by the hands of some one proceeding across seas to the Continent.

'Meantime, farewell; and think of your friend, who with all affectionate esteem is yours

'HENRY OLDENBURG.

'London, August 26, 1661.'

And the following is a somewhat condensed form of the reply Spinoza returned to Oldenburg's letter:—

You might yourself divine how highly your friendship must be prized by me, did your modesty permit you to consider the many accomplishments you possess. When I think of these, I, for my part, am not a little proud to call you friend, especially when I reflect that all things—all spiritual things especially—should be in common among friends. But I feel that I am privileged to do so more through your kindness and good-will than any deserts of mine own. In so far as my mental aptitudes are concerned—if, indeed, I possess any—they are all most heartily at your disposal; and I shall endeavour to give you my views on the subjects we discussed, although I do not think that what I shall say, without your especial indulgence, will prove a means of binding me at all more closely to you.

In the first place, then, I shall speak briefly of God, whom I define as: A Being constituted of an infinity of attributes, each of which is infinite or most perfect of its kind. And here I observe that by an attribute I understand that which is conceived by and in itself, so that the conception of it does not involve the conception of any other thing. For example, space is conceived by and in itself, but not so motion, for motion is conceived in something else, its conception involving the idea of space or extension. Now that the above is the true definition of God appears from this: that by God we understand a Being the most perfect and absolutely infinite; and that such a Being exists is readily to be demonstrated from the definition; but as this is not the proper place, I pass by

the demonstration. What I have here to do in order to satisfy my honoured correspondent is as follows: 1st, to show that in the nature of things there cannot exist two substances which do not differ entirely in their essences; 2nd, that substance cannot be produced, but that existence is its essence; 3rd, that substance must be infinite, or consummately perfect in its kind. These heads demonstrated, my distinguished correspondent will readily apprehend my drift, provided he but keep my definition of God in view at the same time, so that it does not seem necessary to proceed further in this direction at present. Still, as I desire to give you a clear and connected, though brief demonstration of the subject, I can think of nothing better than to send for your consideration and opinion the enclosed slip, whereon you will find my views set forth in geometrical form.

[These are the contents of the slip.]

Axioms.

1. Substance (*Zelfstandigheid*, the self-existent) by its nature is prior to its modifications.

2. Things which differ are distinguished from one another either really or accidentally (modally).

3. Things which are distinguished really, either have different attributes, such as thought and extension; or are ascribed to different attributes, such as understanding and motion, of which the first belongs to thought, the second to extension.

4. Things which have different attributes, as those also which pertain to different attributes, have nothing in them the one of the other.

5. That which has nothing in it of another thing cannot be the cause of the essence of that other thing.

6. That which is the cause of itself cannot possibly have determined or limited itself.

7. That whereby things are preserved is by its nature prior to such things.

Propositions.

1. No self-existent thing (Substance) really existing can have the same attribute ascribed to it that is ascribed to another self-existent thing (Substance); in other words, there cannot be in nature two substances or self-existent things of one and the same nature.

Demonstration. For did two substances exist, they must differ; and so, by Axiom 2, be distinguished either *really* or *accidentally* (modally): not modally, however, for then were mode prior in nature to Substance, in contradiction to Axiom 1: *really*, therefore, in conformity with Axiom 4; consequently that cannot be said of one which is said of the other. Q.E.D.

2. One substance cannot be the cause of the essence of another substance.

Demonstration. Such a cause can have nothing in it of such effect (Prop. 1), seeing that the difference between them is real; consequently, one cannot produce the other.

3. All substance or attribute is by its nature infinite, and consummately perfect in its kind.

Demonstration. No substance is caused by another (Prop. 2); and as consequently, if it exist, it is either of the same attribute as God, or it has a cause for its existence beyond God. If the former, then is it necessarily infinite and consummately perfect in its kind, as are all the attributes of God: if the latter, still is it necessarily such as it is; inasmuch as it cannot have determined itself (Axiom 6).

4. Existence belongs so essentially to the nature of Substance that it is impossible to conceive the idea of the existence of any substance to be present in an infinite understanding which does not really exist in nature.

Demonstration. The true essence of the object of an idea is something really different from the idea, either existing in itself (Axiom 3), or being included in something else, which really exists and is distinct from it, not formally or really, but modally only. Such are all entities or things which we perceive are neither comprised in extension, nor in motion or rest, and which, when they exist, are distinguished not really but only modally from extension. But contradiction would be implied were substantive entity to be conceived of as comprised in, and not as really distinct from, another thing, by Prop. 1 ; neither is Substance produced by or from an object which comprehends it, by Prop. 2; finally, Substance being infinite and most perfect in its nature, by Prop. 3, *ergo*, because its essence is included in no other thing, Substance is a thing existing of itself.

Corollary.

Nature is known from itself, and through no other thing. It consists of an infinity of attributes, each of which is infinite in itself and most perfect in its kind, and has essential existence pertaining to it ; so that beyond it there is, and there can be, neither essence nor existence ; and thus does it accord most exactly with the essence of the alone supreme and blessed God.

Henry Oldenburg, though deeply interested in the speculations of Spinoza, is yet conscious that he has not fully mastered their intent, and therefore pens the following letter to his friend :—

'Honoured Sir, Dear Friend,—I have received, and with great pleasure perused your learned letter. Your geometrical method of demonstration has my entire approval ; but I must at the same time lament my own dulness, which prevents me from so clearly apprehending that which you put with so much neatness and precision. Permit me, therefore, I pray, to lay before you the evidence of my

incapacity, by asking the following questions, answers to which I particularly request of you. First, Do you clearly understand from the definition alone which you give of God, that such a Being exists? For my own part, when I see that definitions contain nothing but conceptions of our minds, and that our minds may conceive many things that have no existence in fact, and are extremely prolific in multiplying conceptions of things once formed, I do not see how from the conception I have of God, I can infer that God exists. I can, indeed, by a mental combination of all the perfections I apprehend in men, animals, plants, minerals, &c., form an idea of a single particular substance which shall possess all these attributes united in itself; my mind can even conceive all these attributes infinitely increased and exalted, and so imagine a most perfect and admirable being; but all this does not seem to me to warrant the conclusion that such a being actually exists.

'The second question is as follows: Are you quite certain that body may not be limited by thought, and thought by body, inasmuch as it is not yet determined what thought is, whether a corporeal motion, or a spiritual act totally distinct from body?

'The third question I propose is this: Do you hold the axioms you have imparted to me as principles not needing demonstration, as intuitions requiring no proof? The first axiom is perhaps of this nature; but I do not see that the remaining three can be put on the same footing. The second, for instance, assumes that in the nature of things nothing but substances and accidents exist, whilst many philosophers maintain that space and time fall under neither of these heads. Your third axiom, again, viz., that "Things which have different attributes have nothing in common," so far from being obvious to me, seems rather to be opposed by everything we know in the world; for all things known to us, whilst they differ in some particulars, do still agree in others. The fourth axiom, further, to the

effect that, "Things which have different attributes cannot be the cause of one another," is not so clear to my clouded mind as not to require some further light to be thrown upon it. God, indeed, has nothing formally in common with the things of creation, though he is held by almost everyone to be their cause.

'Since, therefore, these axioms appear not to me to be beyond the reach of question, you will readily understand that I do not find the propositions founded on them to be more assured. The more I consider them, indeed, the more deeply do I seem to fall into doubt in their regard. Looking closely at the first, for instance, I say that two men are two substances of the same attribute, inasmuch as each possesses reason; whence I conclude that two substances of the same attribute may and do co-exist. With regard to the second, seeing that nothing can be cause of itself, I hold that it scarcely falls within the sphere of our faculties to understand how it should be true that substance cannot be produced, not even by some other substance. For this proposition declares that all substances are causes of themselves, and each and all independent of one another, turns them in short into so many gods, and in this way denies the first Cause of all things. Now I candidly confess that I do not understand this, and trust you will do me the favour to give me your views on these lofty subjects at greater length and with more ample illustration, informing me particularly as to the origin and production of substances, and the relative inter-dependence and subordination of things in general. I entreat you by our friendship to speak with me freely and confidingly on this occasion; and be fully assured that all you honour me with in the way of communication shall be held most sacred by me; it shall never be laid to my charge that aught you imparted to me in confidence had turned to your disadvantage by being divulged. Meantime, believe me to be truly and most sincerely yours,

H. OLDENBURG.'

'Dear Sir (replied Spinoza),—On the eve of setting out for Amsterdam, I received your welcome letter with your objections to the three propositions I sent you. As regards the first, I agree with you in saying that the existence of the thing defined follows in nowise from its definition, but that this follows only (as I show in the scholium to the three propositions) from the definition or idea of some one or other of its attributes; that is to say, of something which is conceived in and through itself. This distinction you will find pointedly made in my definition of God; and the grounds of the distinction, unless I deceive myself, I have given clearly enough in the scholium just referred to—clearly enough, at least, to a philosopher. For I have presumed that the difference between a fancy or a fiction and a clear conception is understood, and the validity of the axiom admitted, that every definition proper, or clear and distinct conception, is true.

'In reply to your second query: You seem to concede that as thought belongs not to the nature of space or extension, so thought is not limited by extension; for your doubt only refers to this particular instance. But observe, that were one to say, Space is not limited by space, but by thought, he would say that space as space is not infinite absolutely, but infinite in its kind only. But you may reply, Thought is perhaps a corporeal act. Suppose for a moment that it is so, though I do not believe that it is, still you will not deny that space as space is not thought; and so much suffices for the illustration of my definition and the demonstration of my third proposition.

'Thirdly, you proceed to say, That axioms are not to be reckoned among the number of common notions. I am not disposed to dispute this point. But then you doubt of their truth; yea, you seem as if you would show their opposites as the more likely to be true. But be good enough to note the definitions I have given of Substance and Accident, whence all that bears on the matter follows; for understand-

ing by Substance, as I do, that which is conceived in and by itself, in other words, that the conception of which involves the conception of no other thing; and by mode, modification or accident, that which is in something else, and is conceived by that wherein it is, it clearly appears, first, that Substance is prior in nature to its accidents; for these without it can neither exist, nor be conceived to exist; and secondly, that besides substances and accidents, there is nothing of reality beyond or outside of the understanding; all, that is, is either conceived in itself, or in something else, and the conception so formed either includes the conception of another thing or it does not. Thirdly, I say, that things having different attributes have nothing in common with one another; for by attribute I understand that the conception of which does not involve the conception of another thing. Fourthly, and to conclude, I say that things which have nothing in common cannot severally be the cause of one another; for, were it otherwise, as between effect and cause, there is nothing in common; all that a thing might have in the way of property it would have from nothing! But should you here interpose and say that God has nothing formally in common with created things, &c., I reply, that I have maintained the direct contrary in my definition; for I say, God is a Being constituted of infinite attributes, each of which is infinite or consummately perfect in its kind.

'With regard to your objection to my first proposition, I beg you, my dear friend, to consider that men are not created but engendered, and that their bodies, although otherwise constituted, already existed before their generation. But this conclusion is obvious; and I assent to the inference, that were a single particle of matter to be annihilated, all space would at the same time vanish.

'I cannot see how my second proposition makes many gods. I acknowledge One only, constituted of an infinity of attributes.

'Yours very heartily and sincerely

'B. DE SPINOZA.'

It was chiefly owing to the entreaties and persuasion of Henry Oldenburg that Spinoza was induced to publish his first great work, entitled 'Tractatus Theologico-Politicus.' It was one of the boldest books ever written; and for a long time Spinoza was loth to publish it, not from any personal fears on his own part, for, as we have seen, he never let personal feeling interfere with him in prosecution of what he believed to be his duty, but because he shrank, as all tender, sensitive natures inevitably must shrink, from giving pain or disturbing the consciences of those who held undoubtingly particular forms of religious faith. He was one of those who believed that religion did not consist in any particular form of faith, but rather in a pervading consciousness of the presence of God, and in an earnest desire to lead a life of the purest virtue, not because there would be a consequent probability of a reward in another life, but because virtue and purity were in themselves the greatest of all rewards. But while this was his own personal view of religion, he knew that there were many humble, devout minds to whom the faintest doubt thrown upon tenets they had cherished from childhood would cause the most intense pain. He therefore habitually refrained from giving vent to his religious opinions in general society, and even when asked about them, tried to evade any complete answer if, as was not unusual, the enquirer in his opinion was not fully capable of comprehending his true meaning.

There is a story told, for instance, of him in connection with his landlady, which plainly shows how much he shrunk from proselytism and disturbance of other people's views :—

His landlady, who was of Christian faith, observing and wondering at the marvellous beauty of his life, could not but believe that if the fruit were so good, the tree that gave rise to the fruit must surely be equally good. Yet she knew he was no Christian. She became troubled in her mind, fearing lest after all Christianity should not be a true religion. She went therefore and consulted him, whose assurance she was beginning to regard as almost

equal with that of her priest, whether he believed it were really possible for her to be saved by her religion, which she knew was not his. He replied gravely, 'Your religion is a good one; you ought not to seek another, nor doubt that yours will procure salvation, provided you add to your piety the tranquil virtues of domestic life.'

With his dislike of disturbing other people's consciences, it was natural, therefore, he should at first shrink from publishing views utterly at variance with any received form of faith. It was true he knew his book would be only read and comprehended by the learned, who were familiar with confessions of doubts and religious difficulties, and into whose minds, therefore, he would be putting little that was not already there; yet he also knew that the very boldness of his opinions would cause the fame of his book (if it were not instantly suppressed) to be bruited about until in some second or third hand form, his views, greatly perverted and exaggerated, might reach and disturb the conscience of some humble, devout Christian or Jew, to whom religious difficulties would never of themselves have occurred, or, even worse, it might come to the ears of the naturally wicked and licentious, to whom the fear of hell acted as the only preventive of vice, and serve as a plausible pretext for indulging excesses and passions natural to their evil nature.

The 'Tractatus' was therefore written some considerable time before it was published. Oldenburg was unwearying in his endeavours to conquer his friend's scruples. 'Why do you hesitate?' he writes. 'What do you fear? Your own discretion would of course counsel you to present your views in the most guarded language. Go forward, most excellent sir, and cast aside fear of giving offence to the pigmies of our day. The battle with ignorance and frivolity has lasted long enough; let true science now proceed on her course, and penetrate more deeply than she has yet done into the innermost sanctuary of nature. I cannot

conclude, my friend, without entreating you to take what I have said into your most serious consideration. For my own part, I can never consent to know that the results of your ardent studies should remain buried in eternal silence.' This letter was written in 1662; and in 1665 he is still more pressing. 'What do you fear? Why hesitate? Begin, and you may be confident of the applause of all real philosophers. I never will believe that you would write anything against the existence and providence of God, and provided that these solid grounds of religion are respected, it is easy to excuse and defend any philosophic opinions.' At last Spinoza yielded, not so much, we may imagine, from fear of causing Oldenburg offence by repeated pertinacity in refusing advice given from purely disinterested motives, as from a conviction gradually growing on him that in the end his book would tend to do more good than harm. The harm it might do would probably be confined to his own generation, and would chiefly consist in shocking the prejudices and wounding the consciences of a few humble, devout souls by exposing the nakedness of tenets they had cherished and clothed for years. But the good his book might do would not be confined to one generation; it might directly or indirectly benefit all future generations. By exposing the nakedness and weakness of all mere outward forms of faith alike, he would at least tend to persuade the believers of one form of faith to be tolerant towards those of another.[1]

[1] In a tolerant age like the present, it is difficult to recall, much less to vividly realise, the wholesale atrocities and life-long persecutions which were solely the product of intolerance. Yet, unless we do endeavour not only to realise the miseries, but to comprehend their cause, we shall not be able to understand how very real was the necessity for some able advocate of tolerant principles to arise as an exponent not only of the virtues of tolerance, but of the vices of intolerance.

Even in our own generation, there is still room for much improvement in the spirit of toleration and charity; but the form the intolerance of these days takes is of so puerile a description as to render us able to pass it by; it chiefly discloses itself in the form of vituperations or expressions of condemnation

And who can say that his object has not been attained? Who shall say that it may not in a great measure be owing

from the more unintellectual of the clergy. But it is only within the last hundred, or, at the outside, hundred and fifty years, that such has been the case. The spirit of intolerance was so powerful, the practice of persecution so formidable, that it is difficult for the impartial student to arise from any prolonged investigation into the history of Christianity without having arrived at the conclusion that the evils of Christianity greatly exceeded the good. The brutalities that were constantly practised were so hideous, the loathsome inhumanities so revolting, that it would not be too much to say the victims to such treatment were literally subjected to a slow process of vivisection. Mr. Lecky has well remarked that what strikes us 'most in considering the mediæval tortures, is not so much their diabolical barbarity, which it is indeed impossible to exaggerate, as the extraordinary variety, and what may be termed the artistic skill, they displayed. They represent a condition of thought in which men had pondered long and carefully on all the forms of suffering, had compared and combined the different kinds of torture, till they had become the most consummate masters of their art, had expended on the subject all the resources of the utmost ingenuity, and had pursued it with the ardour of a passion. The system was matured under the mediæval habit of thought, it was adopted by the inquisitors, and it received its finishing touches from their ingenuity.' (Lecky's 'History of Rationalism in Europe,' vol. i. p. 329).

Able men, and men who in the other relations of life were possessed of the ordinary amount of virtue, seemed suddenly to be turned into fiends if they came into contact with any diverging however slightly from their own particular religious opinions. They used with pride to boast themselves to be the inventors of such and such particular instruments or forms of torture. And unfortunately the evil did not end with the physical suffering. Superstition, that invariable companion of intolerance, caused the unhappy victims to be a prey to the most intense mental terror. Unhappy women who had imagined themselves to be witches fully believed that the earthly torture of their death was but a foretaste of their eternal doom. Parents who from the most earnest sense of duty had denounced their beloved children as heretics were forced to picture those children writhing in the torments of hell. Even the mother's heart, yearning over her unborn infant, was racked with the apprehension that miscarriage or premature confinement might consign the unbaptised little one to eternal fire. It had been laid down by one of the saints 'that little children who have begun to live in their mother's womb, and have there died; or who, having been just born, have passed away from the world without the sacrament of holy baptism, must be punished by the eternal torture of undying fire.' One must be callous indeed to read without emotion the records of the ways and means by which the agonised mother would endeavour to shield her offspring from its anticipated doom. She would implore permission that baptismal water might be sprinkled upon her womb, in hopes that the Almighty would antedate the ceremony. She would undergo any penance,

to the wide influence this book exerted, that throughout Europe citizens of every nationality are allowed, not only to hold, but to openly profess, whatsoever religious opinions they may choose? Who can say how considerable a share this bock may indirectly have had in cleansing the hearts of religious people from the sins of intolerance, bigotry, and oppression?

But at the time it was published, there was an outburst of indignation hurled against it. Even Oldenburg was shocked at its views. Yet its object was more political than theological. As Mr. Lewes has well remarked: 'Spinoza did not want to settle points of religious controversy; he wanted to inculcate principles of liberty and toleration.'

The preface to the 'Tractatus Theologico-Politicus' contains a very clear and ample explanation of the purpose its author had in view. He declares he cannot shut his eyes to the fact that the larger proportion of the misery and folly of this world has its origin in superstition; that superstition, in its turn, has its origin in the fear of capricious powers and influences which change their form and character as our circumstances change. He believes the

or pay down any amount of money, hoping that her own vicarious sufferings might atone for the non-baptism of her innocent little one. But it was all in vain. The oppression of the Church seemed only equalled by the superstition of her victims. As Mr. Lecky has suggestively remarked, 'all the methods by which these unhappy mothers endeavoured to persuade themselves that their children might have been saved are preserved in the decrees of the councils that anathematised them,' showing thereby how vigilant must have been the priests in their endeavours at discovering and checkmating these natural instincts of the mother's heart.

If the perusal of these sufferings, dimmed as they must necessarily be to us by the instrumentality of time and distance, causes us nevertheless so much horror and compassion, how much greater must have been the effect upon the deeply humane Spinoza, himself the victim of excommunication and oppression, and living at a time so little removed from the period of the worst barbarities that he could not fail to feel them in all the vividness of their terrible reality? How natural that he should feel that the publication of his book upon toleration must in the end do more good than harm!

old monarchies encouraged these superstitions for their own purposes, and for the same reason peremptorily prohibited any attempt on the part of the populace at self-enlightenment; still less at free-thought or free speech. Spinoza then proceeds to state that his principal object in writing this book is to enquire into what is meant by 'the inspiration of the Scriptures.' He tells us he intends to disregard any interpretation or commentary that has merely come from the Rabbis or doctors; but to affirm nothing about the Holy Books, to admit nothing as their doctrine, which he cannot find in the Scriptures themselves. He cannot help feeling that if the Catholics have sinned in worshipping symbols and images, all forms of Christians as well as Jews have nearly equally erred in paying too exclusive reverence to, if not in altogether worshipping, a Book. He declares that men, preferring the temporal to the eternal, have exalted the Divine Books above the Divine Word, and that the revealed Word of God is not a certain number of books, but the simple conception of the Divine mind revealed to the prophets; to wit, that we should obey God with the whole mind by cultivating justice and charity. Each man therefore should be left to the judgment of his own mind in forming his faith; only justice and charity are to be universally cultivated. Spinoza concludes his preface by exhorting the philosophical student to read, and the common herd to shun, what he has written; and he expresses his earnest and humble trust that he has written nothing that will not aid in promoting obedience to the laws of his country as well as piety and good manners.'

In accordance with the object proposed in the preface, the first chapter of the Tractatus is 'On Prophecy,' and opens with a definition:—'A prophet is he who interprets the revelations of God to those who cannot have a certain knowledge of the things revealed by God, and who, therefore, can only by mere faith embrace the things that are recorded.' He goes on to say that 'those things which we

know by natural light depend upon the knowledge of God alone, and upon his eternal decrees. But seeing that this natural light is common to all men—for it depends upon foundations common to all men—therefore it is not reckoned of much worth by the vulgar, who are always seeking after things rare and foreign from their own nature, and despise natural gifts; and therefore, when they speak about higher knowledge, would have this natural knowledge cut off, although it has as good right to be called divine as the other, seeing that the nature of God and the decrees of God dictate it to us; and it differs not from that which all call divine, except that the latter extends beyond its limits, and that the laws of human nature, considered in themselves, cannot be the cause of it. But in respect of the certainty which the natural knowledge involves, and of the fountain, viz., God, from which it is derived, it yields in nothing to prophetical knowledge.'

Spinoza next investigates into the full meaning of what is meant by the *inspiration of the Prophets*; and bids us remember that though undoubtedly the writers of the prophetical books frequently employ such expressions as 'the Lord saith;' 'the Lord spake unto me;' 'the spirit of the Lord is upon me,' &c.; yet such expressions were but mere rhetorical figures of speech, not at all uncommon in the East: the Jews in particular making very frequent use of them; never alluding indeed to the idea of mediate or particular causes; but declaring even that money was sent them by God, or that God has disposed their hearts, or had said this or that to them, when they were not alluding to any prophetical communication whatsoever. Spinoza declares in a subsequent passage that the Divine law is universal, and demands no historical records, seeing that it is derived from common notions and significations in the man himself: neither does it demand ceremonies. Its supreme reward is the knowledge of God Himself, and the love of Him in true liberty, with a firm and constant

mind; its supreme punishment is the privation of this love and knowledge, and fleshly servitude or a fluctuating and inconstant mind.

In a later chapter of this same Tractatus, Spinoza discusses at some length the subject of 'Miracles,' and the commencement of the chapter proceeds thus:—

'As men have been wont to call that science which surpasses human apprehension divine, so have they been wont to call the work whereof the cause is generally unknown divine, or the work of God. For people in general think that the power or providence of God then is most clearly manifested when they perceive something to happen in nature which is most uncommon, and contrary to the opinion which they have formed from custom concerning nature. And in no way do they think that the existence of God may be more clearly proved than from this, that nature doth not keep her order. Wherefore they deem that all those set aside God, or at least the providence of God, who explain events and miracles by natural causes, or try to understand them. They suppose, that is to say, that God is doing nothing as long as nature is moving on in her accustomed order, and on the other hand, that the power of nature and natural causes are idle so long as God is acting. They imagine therefore two powers distinct from each other, to wit, the power of God, and the power of natural things, which power they suppose to have been determined by God in a certain manner, or, as most nowadays express themselves, to have been created by Him. But what they mean either by nature or God they know not, except that they assume the power of God to be a sort of regal government, and that they attribute a species of force and impulse to nature. The common herd, therefore, call the unusual works of nature miracles, or the works of God; and, partly out of devotion, partly out of the desire of opposing those who cultivate natural sciences, wish to be ignorant of the causes of natural things, and delight to

hear only of those things which they least understand, and therefore most admire.'

We must not devote much more space and time to the consideration of the Tractatus. Suffice it to say, that though it gained for its author a considerable amount of execration, it also managed to secure for him a by no means small share of fame and celebrity; a celebrity which has gradually increased up to the present time. An abridgment of it appeared in 1720, and in 1737 a complete translation. Spinoza took both the blame and the praise very calmly. The only accusation that ever seemed to wound him, and call from him an earnest, even sometimes an indignant, refutation was the charge of atheism or inculcation of irreligion. He who had such a deep sense of the necessity of true religion; he who was so constantly pervaded with the consciousness of the omnipresence of God, how was it likely that he should seek to inculcate views which he believed must of necessity lead to immorality and sin?

There is one letter that has come down to us in which Spinoza plainly discloses how much he is pained by the misconstructions and condemnation his Tractatus has called forth. The letter is in reply to one he has received from an acquaintance of his, a Jewish doctor of the name of Isaac Orobio, enclosing him a long and most unfair criticism of the Tractatus by one Dr. Velhuysen, who, after devoting many pages to denouncing the errors of the book, concluded by describing Spinoza as 'one who practically inculcated atheism by colourable and crafty arguments.' The following is a condensed form of Spinoza's answer:—

'Learned Sir,—You are doubtless surprised that I have made you wait so long for an acknowledgment of your letter; but, in truth, it is with difficulty I have brought myself to notice the libellous epistle you enclosed; and indeed I only write now to make good my promise to answer it. That I may do as little violence as possible to

my proper sentiments, I shall be brief, contenting myself with showing how your correspondent falsifies both my views and my intention, whether of set purpose and from malevolence, or through ignorance, I cannot so readily tell. But to the matter.

'Your correspondent first says: "that it is of little moment to know to what people I belong, or what manner of life I lead." Had he been duly informed on both these heads he would not so easily have persuaded himself that I inculcate atheism. Atheists, for the most part, are worldlings, and seek eagerly after wealth and distinction: but these all who know me are aware I have ever held in the very slenderest estimation. He is then pleased to say that "I must be a man of no mediocre ability," for the purpose, apparently, of giving point to his next assertion, "that I have at best skilfully, craftily, and with the worst intentions advocated the radically bad and pernicious cause of the Deists." The writer next proceeds to say, "it seems as though, to escape suspicion of superstition I had thought it requisite to divest myself of all religion." I do not pretend to divine what he understands by religion and what by superstition; but I ask, does he cast off religion who rests all he has to say on the subject on the ground that God is to be acknowledged as the Supreme Good; that he is with entire singleness of soul to be loved as such, and that in loving God consists our highest bliss, our best privilege, our most perfect freedom? Further, that the reward of virtue is virtue, and the penalty of incapacity and baseness is ignorance and abjectness of spirit. Still further, that everyone is bound to love his neighbour as himself, and to obey the laws of the land in which, and the authority under which, he lives. Now all this I have not only insisted on as impressively as I could in words, but I have further adduced the most cogent reasons that presented themselves to me in support of my conclusion.

'But I think I can see whence the hostility of my critic

arises. This person finds nothing in virtuous life and right reason in themselves which satisfy or delight him; it seems as though he would rather live under the empire of his passions, yield to his appetites and lusts, were it not that this one consideration withheld him—the fear of punishment. He strikes a bargain with the Almighty, and for good conduct looks for much more ample reward, and of a much more sensible kind, than he expects to find in the Divine love—aye, recompense ever the greater as inwardly he feels more averse to good, as he, reluctantly and perforce, compels himself to effect the good he does. But I quit this ungrateful topic, and proceed to the inferences of my censor, and to this one in especial, that I with glozing and crafty arguments inculcate atheism.

'The grounds of this conclusion appear to be that he thinks I take from God all freedom, that I subject the Supreme to fate. This is utterly false; I do nothing of the sort: on the contrary, I maintain that everything follows by inevitable necessity from the very nature of God. It is universally admitted that God by his nature knows Himself, and that this knowledge follows necessarily from the Divine nature; but I presume no one thinks that God is therefore controlled by fate. On the contrary, all reasonable men believe that God knows Himself freely and necessarily at once; that freedom and necessity, in fact, are terms synonymous when the nature of Deity is in question: God, as author of all, is Himself fate, freedom, and necessity. In this I can see nothing which everyone may not understand, nothing with which anyone can find fault.

'The necessity of things which I contend for abrogates neither divine nor human laws: the moral precepts, whether they have or have not the shape of commandments from God, are still divine and salutary; and the good that flows from virtue and godly love, whether it be derived from God as a ruler and lawgiver, or proceed from the constitu-

tion, that is, the necessity of the Divine nature, is not on this account the less desirable. On the other hand, the evils that arise from wickedness are not the less to be dreaded and deplored because they necessarily follow the actions done, and finally, whether we act from freedom of necessity, we are still accompanied in all we do by hope or fear. My censor therefore says falsely, that I put the question of morals and religion on such a footing that neither command nor prescription are any longer to be recognised. I beg you also to observe how the critic odiously and unjustifiably adds that "I am minded men should lead virtuous lives, not because of the precepts and commands of God, or moved by the hope of reward and fear of punishment, but" &c. In the whole of my Tractate I aver that you will find no word to this effect. On the contrary, I declare expressly that the sum of the Divine law, the law that is written on our hearts and minds by the hand of God, consists in this especially, that we love God as our supreme good, not through fear of punishment, for love knows nothing of fear and cannot flow from fear, not even from love of aught else that we might wish to enjoy, but solely and wholly from devotion to the Supreme: for were this not the rule, we should then love God less than the thing desired.

'It were long to recite everything advanced by my critic in which I can see that he does not come to his task of censor with an entirely assured spirit, I therefore proceed at once to the passage where he says that "I have no grounds for my opinion that Mahomet was not a true prophet." This singular conclusion of his he as strangely seeks to make good from the general statement and opinions I proposed, in spite of the fact that from all I say of Mahomet I plainly show that I regard him as an impostor, inasmuch as he denies throughout the Koran that liberty which the universal religion, the religion which is revealed by natural as well as by prophetic light, allows—the right to worship

God in spirit and in truth, a right which I have maintained must under all circumstances be conceded to mankind. And had I happened not to have done so, I should ask whether I were really bound to show that everyone who had spoken oracularly were a false prophet? If after all I am met by the reply that Mahomet taught divine precepts, then would my critic himself have no grounds for refusing to Mahomet the character of a true prophet.

'As regards the Turks and other peoples not included in the pale of Christianity, I am free to confess that I believe if they worship God in love and truth, and do justly by their neighbour, they have within them that which is equivalent to the spirit of Christ, and that their salvation is assured whatever notions they in their ignorance may entertain of Mahomet and his revelations.

'You see, therefore, my dear friend, that my critic fails greatly of the truth. In conclusion, I venture to hope that in what precedes you will not find anything said too severely, and that is not well deserved by my censor. Should you, however, meet with anything of the sort, I beg you to strike it out or soften and amend it as you may. It is not my wish to vex or irritate him, whoever he may be. Indeed I should have scarcely brought myself to reply to his criticism, had I not pledged you my word that I would do so. Farewell! I commit this letter to your prudence, and beg you to believe that I am, &c.,

'B. DE SPINOZA.'

Strangers were not the only critics who misunderstood him, and consciously or unconsciously perverted what he had written. Even Oldenburg, as we have said, was shocked at the book he had been so eager for Spinoza to bring out. He did not break off all intercourse with him, it is true; but the correspondence between them was no longer of the ardent, admiring, enthusiastic character of former days. He writes to Spinoza courteously but very gravely, at times almost coldly.

'I cannot but approve (runs one of Oldenburg's letters), the purpose you announce, by notes and comments to illustrate and soften down those things in the Tractatus which have shocked so many readers. The chief of these I think may be referred to what you say ambiguously concerning God and nature, which many are of opinion you confound. Moreover, to many you seem to annul the authority and significance of miracles, by which alone the majority of Christians believe that the truth of divine revelation can be established. Further, it is said that you do not express yourself openly concerning Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world and only Mediator between God and man; and that you say nothing of his incarnation and propitiatory death. Your views clearly expressed on these three heads are particularly desired. If, in your communication, you satisfy sincere and reasonable Christians, I believe your position with the public will be assured. So much I have been anxious to impart to you, who am yours very truly,

'H. OLDENBURG.

'November 15, 1675.'

'Excellent Sir (replied Spinoza), your very short epistle of November 15 reached me on Saturday last.

'To give you my mind concerning the three heads you mention particularly, I say, as regards the first, that I take a totally different view of God and nature from that which the later Christians usually entertain; for I hold that God is the *immanent* not the *extraneous* cause of all things. I say, all is in God; all lives and moves in God. And this I maintain with the Apostle Paul, and perhaps with every one of the philosophers of antiquity, although in a way other than theirs. I might even venture to say that my view is the same as that entertained by the Hebrews of old, if so much may be inferred from certain traditions, greatly altered and falsified though they be. It is, however, a complete mistake on the part of those who say that my

purpose in the Tractatus is to show that God and nature, under which last term they understand a mass of corporeal matter, are one and the same. I had no such intention.

'With regard to miracles, on the contrary, I am most intimately persuaded that the truth of divine revelation can only be assured by the wisdom of the doctrines, and in no wise by miracles, in other words by ignorance. This I think I have shown at ample length in the sixth chapter of the Tractatus, where I treat of miracles. To what is there set forth I only add that I make this grand distinction between religion and superstition, that the one has wisdom, the other ignorance for its foundation; and this suffices me as ground for my assertion that Christians are not verily distinguished from other men by their faith, their charity, and other fruits of the Holy Spirit, but by certain special beliefs or opinions only, inasmuch as with the mass of mankind of all nations they build on miracles, *i.e.*, on ignorance, the source of everything that is bad in the world, the leaven that turns faith, though true in itself, into superstition. I much doubt, however, whether kings will ever consent to yield a remedy for this evil.

'Lastly, and to give you my opinion without reserve on the third head, I say, that it is by no means necessary to know Christ according to the flesh; for of that Eternal Son of God, in other words, of the eternal wisdom of God which manifests itself in all things, in the mind of man especially, and above all in Jesus Christ, we are to hold a totally different opinion. Without this spiritual view I hold that no man can attain to the state of true beatitude, inasmuch as this alone informs us as to what is true or false, good and evil, &c. And because, as I have said, this divine wisdom was most especially manifested in Jesus Christ, so was it preached by his disciples, in so far as it was imparted by him to them; and in so far might they vaunt themselves on showing forth this spirit of Christ

more clearly than other men. As to what certain churches add to this, viz., that God assumed our human nature, I have said expressly that I do not understand what they mean; yea, to say truth, they seem to me to speak as irrationally as they would do did they say that the circle had assumed the nature of the square.

'So much I presume will suffice to show you what I think of the three heads you proposed for my consideration; but you will know better than I whether what I have now said is likely to receive the assent of your Christian friends. Farewell.

'November, 1675.'

Want of space prohibits us from devoting any more time to the correspondence concerning the Tractatus. We must proceed as quickly as we can to the consideration of the 'Ethics,' which was not published till after the death of Spinoza, who most probably thought it would be wiser, both for his own sake as well as for the better reception of the book, if he waited till a little of the odium caused by the Tractatus had passed away.

The 'Ethics' is divided into five parts. The first part treats of God. The second of the nature and principle or source of the mind. The third of the source and nature of the affections. The fourth, of human slavery, or the power of the passions or inordinate affections. The fifth, of human freedom, or the power of the intellect.

Each part is composed in the same manner, namely, after the geometrical method of definitions, axioms, propositions, occasionally ending with a corollary. So logically does Spinoza argue, and so clearly are his conclusions worked out, that if we once accept his premiss, it is almost impossible not to accept the conclusion. We can unfortunately give but a few specimens of his method here.

PART I.—OF GOD.

Definition 1. By its own Cause I understand that the essence of which involves existence; or that which by its nature can only be conceived as existing.

2. The thing is said to be Finite in its kind which may be limited by another thing of the same nature. A body, for example, is said to be finite, because we can always conceive another larger than it. In the same way is thought limited by another thought. But a body is not limited by a thought, nor a thought by a body.

3. By Substance I understand that which is self-comprised, and is conceived by and through itself alone; that is to say, substance is that the conception of which requires the conception of no other thing whence it has to be derived.

4. By Attribute I mean that which the understanding apprehends in substance as constituting its essence.

5. By Mode I understand an affection of substance, or that which is in something else, by which also it is apprehended.

6. By God I understand the Absolutely Infinite Being; in other words, God is substance constituted by an infinity of attributes, each of which expresses an eternal and infinite essence.

7. The thing is said to be Free which exists by the sole necessity of its nature, and is determined to action by itself alone. That, on the contrary, is necessary, or rather constrained, which is determined to exist and to act in a certain determinate manner by something else.

8. By Eternity I understand Existence itself—very existence, conceived as following necessarily from the sole definition of an eternal thing.

Axioms.

1. All that is, is either in itself or in something other than itself.

2. That which cannot be conceived by another thing, must be conceived by itself.

3. From a given determinate cause an effect necessarily follows; and contrariwise, without a given determinate cause it is impossible that an effect can follow.

4. Knowledge of an effect depends on knowledge of a cause, and involves the same.

5. Things that have nothing in common cannot severally be understood by one another, or the conception of one does not involve the conception of the other.

6. A true idea must agree with its ideate or object.

7. Whatever can be thought of as non-existing does not in its essence involve existence.

Propositions.

Proposition 1. Substance is prior in nature to its affections.

Demonstration. This is comprised in Definitions 3 and 5.

Proposition 5. In the nature of things there cannot be two or more substances of the same nature or attribute.

Demonstration. Did several distinct substances exist, they would be distinguished from each other either by diversity of attributes or by diversity of affections (mode); if by diversity of attributes only, it were then conceded that there is but one substance of the same attribute; if by diversity of affections, inasmuch as substance is prior in nature to its affections (by Proposition 1), its affections set aside and considered in itself, *i.e.*, truly considered (by Definitions 3 and 6), it could not be conceived as distinct from anything else; so that, as stated in the preceding proposition, there cannot be several substances but one substance only. Q.E.D.

Proposition 7. To exist belongs to the nature of substance.

Demonstration. Substance, we have seen, cannot be produced by anything else; it must therefore be the cause of itself, *i.e.*, its essence necessarily involves existence (by Definition 1), in other words, to exist belongs to its nature. Q.E.D.

Proposition 8. All substance is necessarily infinite.

Demonstration. Substance of one attribute exists not save as one (by Proposition 5); and to exist belongs to its nature. It will therefore be in its nature to exist finitely or infinitely. Not finitely, however, for then would it have to be conceived as limited by another substance of the same nature (by Definition 2), which would also have to exist necessarily (by Proposition 7); in which case there would be two substances of the same attribute, which is absurd (by Proposition 5). Substance therefore exists infinitely. Q.E.D.

Scholium 1. As finity is in truth partial negation, and infinity absolute affirmation of existence of every kind, it follows from Proposition 7 alone, that all substance must be infinite.

Scholium 2. I do not doubt but that they who judge of things confusedly, and are not accustomed to apprehend things by their first causes, will find some difficulty in understanding the demonstration of our seventh proposition. The difficulty here arises from the distinction between modifications of substances and substances themselves being overlooked, and from ignorance of the way in which things are produced; whence it comes that such a beginning as natural things are seen to have is connected with substances. They indeed who are ignorant of the true causes of things, confound all, and without the slightest mental misgiving imagine plants and animals as well as man to be endowed with speech; they confound the Divine with the human nature, and readily ascribe human affections and passions to God, especially when they are uninformed as

to how affections are produced in the mind of man. Were the nature of substance, however, but properly considered, our seventh Proposition would be questioned by none; on the contrary, it would become an axiom to every one, and be reckoned among the number of common notions or self-evident truths. For by substance would be understood that which is in itself and is conceived by itself, or that the conception of which requires not the conception of any other thing; and by affections, modes, or modifications, again, that which is in something else, and of which the conception is formed from the conception of the thing in which it is; whereby it comes that we can have true conceptions of non-existent modifications, inasmuch as, although non-existent in act out of the understanding, still their essence is so involved in something else, that they can be conceived by or through it. But the verity of substances in themselves is beyond the understanding only because they are conceived through themselves. Did anyone say therefore, that he had a clear and distinct, in other words, a true idea of substance, and nevertheless doubted whether such substance existed, this were the same in sooth, as if he said that he had a true idea, and yet doubted whether it was not a false one. In the same way, did he maintain substance to be created, this would be equivalent to declaring that a false idea might be true—than which nothing more absurd can be imagined.

Proposition 14. Besides God no substance can exist or be conceived to exist.

Demonstration. Since God is the absolutely infinite being to whom no attribute which is or which expresses the essence of substance can be denied (Definition 6), and as this exists necessarily (by Proposition 1,) did any substance other than God exist, it would have to be interpreted by some attribute of God, and thus would two substances of the same attribute coexist, which is absurd (by Proposition 5). No substance other than God, therefore, can either exist, or be conceived to

exist. For if conceived at all it must necessarily be conceived as existing, and this, by the first part of the demonstration, is absurd. Wherefore, beyond or beside God, no substance can either exist, or be conceived as existing. Q.E.D.

Corollary. From this demonstration it clearly results, 1st, that God is Sole or Single; for one absolutely infinite entity existing (Definition 6), there can, in the nature of things, be but one absolutely infinite substance.

Corollary 2. It follows in the second place, that the extended thing, and the thinking thing—thought and extension—are either attributes of God, or are modes and affections of the attributes of God; for, by Axiom 1, we know that all things which be either exist in themselves or in something else.

Proposition 15. Whatever is, is in God; and nothing can be, neither can anything be conceived to be, without God.

Demonstration. Except God no substance either is, or can be conceived to be (Proposition 14); that is, there is no substance but God which is of itself, or may be conceived by itself (Definition 3). Modes or affections of substance, however, inhering in something else, by which they are also conceived (Definition 5), can neither exist nor be conceived to exist without substance. Wherefore, modes inhere exclusively in the Divine nature, and can be conceived through it alone. But as nothing exists save substances and modes (by Axiom 1), therefore can there be nothing without God, neither can anything be conceived to be without God. Q.E.D.

Proposition 18. God is the immanent or indwelling, not the transient or outside, cause of all things.

Demonstration. All things that be are in God, and must be conceived through God, as shown in Proposition 15, and thus is God the cause of the things that are in Him. This in the first place. Again: extraneous to God there can be no substance (Proposition 14), *i.e.* out of God there can be nothing existing of itself (by Definition 3). This in the

second. God, therefore, is the immanent, not the transient or extrinsic, cause of all things. Q.E.D.

Proposition 29. In the nature of things there is no contingency; all things are determined by the necessity of the Divine nature to exist and to act in a certain definite manner.

Demonstration. Whatever is, is in God (Proposition 15). But God cannot be spoken of as anything contingent, for he exists necessarily, not contingently. The modes of the Divine nature for the same reason follow necessarily, not contingently, and this whether they be considered as determined to action by the Divine nature absolutely, or by some certain mode of the Divine nature; for God is not only the cause of these modes as they exist simply, but further, as they are considered to be determined in their actions. Because, if not determined by God, it is impossible, and not contingent merely, that they should determine themselves; and on the contrary, if determined by God, it is impossible, and not contingent, that they should make themselves indeterminate. Wherefore we conclude that all things are determined by the necessity of the Divine nature, not only to exist, but also to exist and to act in a certain definite manner, and that there is no such thing as contingency in nature. Q.E.D.

Scholium. Before proceeding further, I desire to explain, or rather to inform the reader, what is to be understood by the expressions *natura naturans* and *natura naturata; nature acting* and *nature acted on.* From all that precedes I think it will appear that by the expression *natura naturans* is to be understood, that which is in itself and is conceived by itself, or such attributes of Substance as express an eternal and infinite essence; in other words, God:—God, regarded as free cause of all that is. By *natura naturata*, again, I understand all that follows from the necessity of the nature of God, or from each of the several attributes of God; in other words, all the modes of the

attributes of God, these being considered as things or qualities that are in God, and which without God could neither be, nor be conceived as being. Q.E.D.

Before concluding this first part of the 'Ethics,' it may be well to endeavour to divest the reader of any misinterpretation he may have formed of Spinoza's true meaning through the ambiguity of a word. At first sight the identification of God with substance seems startling, not to say shocking; it appears like the most pronounced materialism or the crudest atheism. Yet, as we have seen, Spinoza resented most bitterly the title either of materialist or atheist. The whole confusion lies in the introduction of the word *substance*. It is true that Spinoza endeavoured to guard against any misapprehension arising from the employment of this word by repeated explanations of the manner in which he wished *substance* to be understood (see particularly the second scholium to Proposition 8). Yet in spite of all his explanations, it cannot be denied that he was unfortunate in his selection of this word. In our opinion it was this selection which was the cause of the greater portion of the obloquy he received during his life, as it is equally the cause of much of the misrepresentation he suffers in our own day. Mr. Lewes has well pointed out (and we confess the same idea had occurred to ourselves before we had marked the passage in Mr. Lewes' History), that had Spinoza used the Greek word *Noumenon* instead of the Latin word *Substans*, a great deal of unnecessary confusion would have been spared. For whereas substance is wholly identified in our minds with matter, Noumenon we know to mean ground of existence, or cause and basis of all phenomena. In reading Spinoza therefore, whenever we come across the word 'substance,' we must remember he does not intend us to understand matter or anything to do with matter, but that instead he intends to convey to our minds the idea of the Noumenon or Reality, which pervades and underlies matter and all external nature; the immanent, instead of

the extraneous, principle of the universe; the one pervading Reality, of which all phenomena are but transitory and fleeting modes.

A considerable portion of the remaining four parts of the 'Ethics,' and nearly the whole of the Appendix to the First Part, are taken up with controverting the doctrine of Free Will, and with endeavouring to expose the absurdity of a belief in final causes. The forty-eighth Proposition of Part II. sets forth, *That in the mind there is no such thing as absolute or free will, but the mind is determined to will this or that by a cause which is determined by another cause, this by yet another, and so on to infinity.* The succeeding Proposition (viz. the forty-ninth), declares, *That in the mind there is no volition*, i.e., *neither affirmation nor negation other than that which idea, as idea, involves.* A clearer explanation of these two propositions is to be found, I think, in the Appendix to the First Part, than in the actual demonstrations of the two propositions themselves; and as, moreover, the arguments Spinoza employs in the refutation of the doctrine of free will at the same time tend to destroy all belief in teleology, I have made a somewhat condensed form or abstract of the Appendix, which I herewith subjoin:—

It has been with man an almost universal, but at the same time utterly groundless belief, that God has made all things for the sake of man, in order to attach him to Himself, and be held by him in the highest honour. Men are conscious of their volitions and appetites, but are ignorant of the causes of those volitions and appetites; and therefore imagine themselves to be free to desire or to will in whatsoever way they may choose. They imagine everything to be created to some useful end, subservient to the ultimate good of man. They argue that as eyes were created for vision, teeth for chewing, herbs and animals for food, the sea for the production of fishes, the sun to give light, etc., so all natural things must be created for the use of man, and man, in his turn, must have been created

for the worship of God. But in striving thus to demonstrate that nature does nothing in vain—that is, nothing which was not for the use of man, they are met with this difficulty:—Among the many conveniences of nature not a few inconveniences are encountered, such as tempests, earthquakes, diseases, etc., and these are presumed to be due to the anger of the gods, because of the shortcomings of mankind; and although everyday experience and numerous instances declare that good and evil befall the righteous and the unrighteous alike, this has never yet availed to divest man of this vulgar interpretation of the calamities that occur in the world. For he will rather relegate contradictory facts to the limbo of things unknown, and of uses unapprehended, than consent to pull down the scaffolding of his superstition and begin to consider the world anew. Wherefore men have conceived that the judgments of the gods far exceeded human comprehension, a conclusion which were cause sufficient in itself wherefore eternal truths should be hidden from mankind for ever, were it not that the mathematics, which take no note of ends, but are solely occupied with the essences and properties of figures, happily presented them with another standard for the apprehension of truth. All such interpretation of evil is utterly false.* Nature has no special predetermined ends. Final causes are nothing more than human fictions. Everything in nature proceeds by a certain eternal necessity. The vulgar doctrine of finality contravenes nature entirely. For it assumes as effect that which is truly cause, and as cause that which is verily effect; further, it makes that which is prior in nature ulterior, and finally, that which is supreme and all-perfect it renders subordinate and most imperfect. For if God acts for an end or purpose, he necessarily desires something which he is without. And although theologians and metaphysicians distinguish between the thing desiderate and the end assimilate, they still confess that God always acted in respect of Himself, and not

in respect of things to be created ; because, before creation nothing upon which He could act can be conceived but God Himself; and so are they necessarily forced to admit that God wanted or was without those things for which He willed to prepare means, and must have desired them—a conclusion which is obvious enough. But we are not to overlook the fact that they who advocate this doctrine, and who desire to find scope for the display of their ingenuity in assigning causes, have had recourse to a new style of argument to help them in their conclusions, namely, by reductions not to the impossible or absurd, but to ignorance or the unknown : a procedure which shows very plainly that there was no other course open to them. If, for instance, a stone or tile fell from the house-top on the head of anyone and killed him, they demonstrated, in their way, that the stone or tile fell to the end that the man might be killed. For if not to this end, and by the special will of God, how should so many concurring circumstances (and very many circumstances do often concur in such a case) have led to the event? You will reply, perhaps, that the event happened because of the rough wind, the loose tile, and the presence of the man on the spot. But they will then urge: Wherefore blew the wind so rudely? Why was the man at the particular instant on the very spot on which the tile must fall? If you now answer, that the wind blew because of the neighbouring tempest, whose approach was indicated by the heaving of the sea on the preceding day, though the weather was then fine, and because the man had been invited and was on his way to the house of a friend, they will still go on to ask—for in such case there is no end of asking—why the tempest arose at a distance on the day before, and why the man was invited at that particular time,—the cause of a new cause inquired for in endless sequence, until shelter is sought in what in such a case is called the 'Will of God,' the asylum of ignorance. So also when they regard the structure of

the human body they are amazed; and because they are ignorant of the cause of so much art, they conclude that it has been contrived and put together by no mechanical, but by some divine or supernatural art, in such wise that each part in serving its own purpose is not injurious to another. And thus it comes that he who enquires into the true causes of miracles and prodigies, and who admires the harmony of natural things as a person of knowledge and understanding and not as a simpleton, is everywhere proclaimed an infidel and impious person, and is so regarded by those whom the vulgar bow before as the interpreters of nature and the Divine decrees. When men had persuaded themselves that everything in nature was made for them, they naturally called all that conduced to their own well-being and comfort Good; and everything the reverse of this they called Bad. But from this arrangement arose not a few difficulties; for men differ more than they agree in their notion of what is good and what is bad. Everyone knows the adage—*tot homines quot sententiæ*—so many men so many minds, so many palates, so many tastes—admissions which show sufficiently that men judge in all cases by the disposition of their brain, and imagine things rather than understand them. Hence have arisen controversies, ending, not unfrequently, with a complete and general scepticism. Whereas if men had started with the determination to form no opinion about things they did not comprehend, to come to no conclusion which was not equally incontrovertible with the demonstrations of mathematics, much confusion and error would have been spared. For all the explanations which the vulgar are wont to give of nature are mere modes of imagining; they are definitions of nothing, they are solely the creation of the imagination, and have nothing to do with the dictates of the reason. A very little reason should be sufficient to teach men the futility of the doctrine of Final Causes; and when once they had satisfied themselves that the works of nature were not in-

tended for the sole use of man, they would then be convinced that the perfection of each thing is to be estimated from its own nature and power alone. There is not anything that should be considered more or less perfect because it flatters or offends the sentiments of man; and it is a fundamental error to call those things Good or Bad, because they happen to be agreeable or repugnant to the dictates of human nature.

Spinoza is quite aware that (though he has endeavoured, as he thinks successfully, to expose the impossibility of there being any real good or real bad,) those words must nevertheless be retained, for want of better, as symbols of such things as are beneficial, or the reverse, to man. His views on this subject are explained and his opinions, as set forth in the Appendix to the First Part further extended in the introduction to Part IV., 'On Slavery, or the Strength of the Affections.'

'I call man's inability (he says) to moderate and control the emotional element in his nature, Slavery. For man, under the dominion of the affections, is not master of himself; and I therefore propose, in this fourth part of my Ethics, to enquire into the reason of this state of things; and to show, besides, what there is of Evil and what of Good in the affections. Before setting out on my task, however, I am disposed to say a few words on *perfection* and *imperfection*, and on *good* and *evil*, by way of preface.

'That is called perfect, which, after it has been begun, is entirely completed; that is imperfect which is allowed to remain in an unfinished condition. If, for instance, we see a house incomplete, and know that the purport of its builder was to finish it, we naturally call it imperfect, and contrariwise, that which has attained completion we call perfect. But now, imagine we see some work the like of which we have never seen before, and knew not what design its artificer had in view, we should not be able to tell whether such a work were perfect or imperfect. And thus it is that men have fallen into the confusion of apply-

ing those words perfect and imperfect (which should be only applied to the works of their own hands) to the works of nature; imagining that because man works with a purpose, nature must likewise do the same. But we have shown in the Appendix to our First Part that nature does not act with a purpose; for the Eternal and Infinite Being whom we call God, or Nature, as he exists of necessity, so does he act of necessity. The reason, therefore, why God acts and why he exists, is one and the same, and as he does not exist for any end or purpose, neither does he act for any end or purpose: for as he is without beginning or end, as regards his existence, so is he infinite and eternal as regards his acts. Now a final cause, as it is called, is nothing but a human appetite or desire considered as the origin or cause of anything; and therefore, when men say that nature goes astray, they ought rather to describe it that nature does not work for a human purpose. The words Perfection and Imperfection are therefore only to be conceived of as modes of human thought. And in like manner the words Good and Evil, as applied to things considered in themselves, are also but modes of thought, and signify nothing of a positive nature.

Spinoza then goes on to repeat that that only is perfect or imperfect which is or is not in accordance with the designs of its builder or author; and that therefore, when in treating of the affections, he has occasion to employ the words Good or Evil, he only does so on the hypothesis that man has an idea, an exemplar or pattern, of the highest type of human nature; and when consequently he employs the word Good, he means that which approaches most nearly to the highest exemplar, and, conversely, that is evil which diverges most widely away from it. And in accordance with this plan the first two definitions of Part IV. are:

1. By good I understand that which we know for certain to be useful to us.

2. By evil I understand that which we know for certain prevents us from enjoying something good.

From these two definitions Spinoza proceeds to work out his system of ethics, and to explain that in his opinion the only prevention to the slavery of the affections is by submission to the guidance of the reason. He believes man to be a part of nature; but (*vide* Proposition 35) in so far as men live under the guidance of reason, in so far only do they always and necessarily agree with nature. There is no single thing in nature more useful to man than the example of the man who lives in conformity with the dictates of reason. When each individual man strives especially for that which is truly useful to himself, then is he most useful to others; for by taking care of himself, he is not only living according to the dictates of nature, but is setting an example to his fellow-men to do likewise; and that the example of one good man is of almost incalculable benefit to his fellows may be proved by so many illustrations that it has passed into a common adage that man is a god to man. Men, as they live reasonably, are most useful to their fellow-men, and it is on this account that we should strive to induce men to live according to the rules of reason. For the good which a man loves and desires, he will love and desire the more constantly if he sees that others love and desire it also. He who lives in conformity with the dictates of reason strives to the extent of his power to repay the hatred, anger, contempt of others, with love and good-will. For all the emotions connected with hate are bad. Hate is increased by reciprocated hate, but love will very often extinguish even hate itself. Hatred, therefore, can never be of service to our fellow-creatures; cheerfulness and contentment are always good; melancholy and discontent, on the other hand, are always bad. Spinoza dilates upon this topic somewhat fully.

'Nothing (he says in the second scholium to Propo-

sition' 45), nothing, indeed, but a sour and gloomy superstition forbids us to enjoy ourselves; why should it be held more seemly to satisfy the cravings of hunger and thirst, than to drive away melancholy? These are my views, these my sentiments: no divinity, none but an envious being, could take pleasure in my helplessness and suffering; nor do tears and sobs, and fear and other affections of the sort, which are but evidences of an abject and feeble spirit, ever lead to virtuous conduct; the more joyfully we feel, on the contrary, to the higher grade of perfection do we rise, in other words, the more do we necessarily partake of the Divine nature. To use the good things of life, therefore, and to enjoy ourselves, in so far as this may be done, short of satiety and disgust, for here excess were not enjoyment, is true wisdom. It is wisdom, I say, in man to refresh and recreate himself by moderate indulgence in pleasant meats and drinks, to take delight in sweet odours and sounds, to admire the beauties of plants and flowers, to dress becomingly, to join in manly and athletic sports and games, to frequent the theatre and other places of the sort; all of which may be done without injury to others. For the human frame is compacted of many parts of diverse nature, which continually crave fresh and varied aliment, in order that the whole body may be alike fit for everything whereof by nature it is capable, and consequently that the mind, also, may be in a state to take interest in, and understand the greatest possible variety of subjects.

'Such a mode of life accords entirely with the principles I uphold, and with common practice also; I believe it to be the best that can be followed, and every way to be commended, so that I do not think it necessary to say any more on the subject.'

There is a fragment—the earliest work ever written by Spinoza—entitled 'On the Improvement of the Intellect,' which has been quoted by Mr. Lewes in his 'History of Philosophy,' but, as far as I am aware, not noticed by any

other historian of philosophy, which appears to me to be a key to, almost indeed a complete though concise summary of the three later parts of the 'Ethics.' Mr. Lewes has not so treated of it; he has merely quoted it as a proof of the exalted standard of conduct Spinoza not only laid down for himself, but most consistently followed. But in addition to this, the fragment also affords, I think, an indubitable proof that the general principles of the 'Ethics' were thought out and roughly sketched out when Spinoza was still in the dawn of his manhood: principles which were consistently retained, never altered, only extended, till they reached their culmination in the 'Ethics,' the work of his maturity, and not published till after his decease. The passage in question [1] runs thus:—

'Experience having taught me that all the ordinary affairs of life are vain and futile, and that those things which I dreaded were only in themselves good or bad according as they moved my soul, I finally resolved on enquiring if there were anything truly good in itself, and capable of being communicated to man, a good which, everything else being rejected, could fill the soul entirely, whether, in short, that good existed which, if possessed, could give supreme and eternal happiness. I pondered on the advantages which accrued from reputation and wealth, all of which I must renounce if I would seriously undertake the search after another object, and which if happiness chanced to belong to these advantages, I should necessarily see escape me; and if, on the other hand, happiness belongs to other objects, and I sought happiness where it is not to be found, then also should I miss it. I therefore resolved this in my mind, whether it were possible for me to regulate my life according to a new rule, or at any rate ascertain the existence of such a rule, without changing the actual order of my life—a thing which I have often in vain attempted. For those things which most frequently occur in life, and in which men,

[1] Lewes' 'Philosophy,' vol. ii. pp. 171–175.

judging from their acts, think supreme happiness consists, may be reduced to three, *riches*, *honours*, and *pleasures of the senses*. By these three the mind is so occupied it is scarcely able to think of any other good. Pleasures of sense, especially, so absorb the mind that it reposes in them, and thus is prevented from thinking of anything else. But after fruition follows sadness, which if it does not absorb the mind, at least disturbs and deadens it. The search after riches and honours also occupies the mind, especially when sought for their own sake, as if they constituted happiness. Repentance does not follow riches and honours as it follows sensuous pleasures; on the contrary, the more we possess of them the greater is our pleasure, and consequently the greater our desire to increase them. Honour or reputation is a serious impediment, because to attain it we must direct our lives according to the wishes of others, avoiding what the vulgar avoid, seeking what men seek. When, therefore, I saw the obstacles which hindered me from following a rule of conduct different from the ordinary rule, and saw how great was the antagonism between the two, I was forced to enquire which of the two would be the most useful to me; for, as I said just now, I seemed to be abandoning the certain for the uncertain. But after meditating thereupon I found, first, that in giving up the ordinary advantages I really renounced only an uncertain good for another equally uncertain, the latter, however, being only uncertain as to the possibility of my attaining it. After assiduous meditation I found that I was only quitting certain evils for a certain good. For I saw that I was in the greatest danger, which forced me to seek a remedy, even an uncertain one, as a man in sickness, seeing certain death before him unless something be done, will seize at any remedy, however vague, for in that is all his hope. And, indeed, all those things which the vulgar seek were not only unable to furnish me with a remedy, but were obstacles, because they are frequently the very causes of

the ruin of those who possess them, and always of those who are possessed by them. Many are the examples of those who have suffered persecution, nay, death, on account of their wealth, or who, in the hope of gain, have exposed themselves to perils, and paid for their folly with their lives. Nor are there fewer examples of men who, in the pursuit of honours, or in defending them, have become most miserable. Lastly, there are innumerable examples of those who by excess of sensual pleasures have accelerated their death. Hence the evil seems to me to arise from this; that all our happiness and unhappiness depends solely on the quality of the object which we desire. For those things which are not desired arouse neither quarrels nor sorrow if they escape us, nor envy when others possess them, neither fear nor hate, in a word, no commotion of the mind; whereas all those evils belong to our attachment to perishable things such as those just spoken of. But love of what is eternal and infinite nourishes the mind with joy only, and is never touched with sorrow, and it is *this* good so eminently desirable that all men should seek. Yet it was not without meaning that I said, *to consider the matter seriously.* For although I clearly perceived this in my mind, I could not banish all love of wealth, honours, and sensual pleasures. But I found that so long as my mind was occupied with these thoughts so long was it turned away from passions, and seriously meditated the new rule of life, which was to me a great consolation. For thus I saw that these evils were not incurable; and although at first these serious moments were rare and brief, yet afterwards, as the *true good* became better known, they became more frequent and more durable, especially when I saw that the acquisition of wealth, glory, and sensual pleasures was fatal so long as these were sought for their own sakes, and not as means to an end. If, indeed, they are sought as means, then they have their value and

do little hurt: on the contrary, they are very useful towards the proposed end.

'Here let me say what I mean by the *true good*, and what is the *supreme good*. To understand these rightly it must be noted that *good* and *evil* are only relative, so that one and the same thing may be called good or evil according to its different aspects, and the same of perfection or imperfection; as we shall understand when we see how all things exist according to the eternal order and according to the eternal laws of nature. But as human weakness cannot follow this eternal order by its own thought, and meanwhile man conceives a human nature much surpassing his own to the height of which nothing seems to prevent his arriving, he is incited to seek the means of arriving at this perfection, and everything which seems to lead there is called by him the *true good*. But the *supreme good* would be for him and others, if possible, to enjoy this higher nature. And what is this? We shall hereafter show that it is the union of the mind with all nature. This, then, is the end I must seek; to acquire this higher human nature, and use every effort for others to acquire it also; that is to say, it is necessary for my happiness that many others should think with me, so that their intellects and their desires should accord with mine; for which two things are necessary: first, to understand nature so as to be able to acquire this higher human nature; next, to form such a society as will admit of the greatest number arriving easily at and securing such perfection. Therefore our tasks are a moral philosophy and the education of children; and, as health is a not unimportant means for the end we have in view, the whole science of medicine must be added; and as the arts make difficult things easy, and aid us by saving our labour and time, we must not omit mechanics. But above all, must be sought a method of improving the understanding; and, as far as possible to correct it from the beginning, so that, warned against error, it may know clearly.'

The spirit of this passage runs through nearly the whole of the 'Ethics,' but in the fourth and fifth parts particularly, the similarity is so striking that many of the propositions might be called complete paraphrases of this Fragment, written by Spinoza when he was yet in the dawn of his manhood. Take the Scholium to Proposition 10 of the Fifth Part, for instance:—

'The best we can do, therefore, so long as we have not a perfect knowledge of our affections, is to conceive a rational mode of living, to lay down certain precepts for the conduct of our lives, to commit these to memory, and to apply them strictly to the particular incidents encountered in the world, so that, being always at hand for application, our imagination may be constantly influenced by them. For instance, we have laid it down, among the rules for the conduct of our lives (in Part IV.), that hate is to be overcome by love or magnanimity, not to be paid back or balanced by reciprocated hate. Now that we may always have this prescription of reason at hand, when occasion makes its application necessary, we should ever and anon be thinking over the common causes of offence among men, and meditating how and in what way these are best to be got the better of by kindness and magnanimity. For thus shall we have the image of an injury in connection with the imagination of a wholesome precept always present to our mind when offence is given or injury is done. If we also keep steadily in view what is truly useful and even good for us, think of the benefits that accrue from friendship and social life, what peace of mind ensues from living in conformity with reason, and further, that men, like all things else, act by the necessity of their nature, then will dislike or hatred, such as is wont to be excited by an injury done, make the smallest possible impression on the imagination and be most easily overcome; or should the anger that is wont to be aroused by greater injuries not be so easily subdued, subdued it will be nevertheless,

although not without mental struggle, continued however for a much shorter time than if such premeditations had not been present to the mind.

'The same train of reflection may be pursued with respect to the courage that is required to get the better of fear: the common dangers of life are to be noted and frequently thought over, and the presence of mind and fortitude whereby they are best avoided or overcome made familiar by reflection. But here it is to be observed, that in ordering our thoughts and imaginations we are still to attend to those things that are good under all circumstances and in every place; so that we are always to be moved to action by the emotion of joy. For example: if any one sees that he is too fond of fame, too eager for glory, he is forthwith to bethink him of the right use of glory, of the purposes, the ends for which it is to be pursued, and the means by which it is to be won; but he is not to think of its abuse, of the fickleness of mankind or such idle vanities as brain-sick men alone consider; for they are the vain-glorious only who torture themselves with such reflections, especially when they despair of achieving the glory to which they aspire; desiring to appear sages, they only proclaim their folly. It is certain that they are often the most eager for fame who cry out against its abuse and most loudly denounce the vanities of the world. Nor, indeed, is this peculiar to the vain-glorious and ambitious, but is common to all to whom fortune is unpropitious, and who are of feeble soul. For the envious or covetous poor man is for ever speaking of the abuses of wealth, and the vices of the rich, whereby he does but torment himself and shows plainly that it is not only his poverty he bears impatiently, but the wealth of others which he begrudges them. So also does he who is indifferently received by his mistress think of nothing but the fickleness, the inconstancy, and the other accredited shortcomings of woman, all of which, however, are forgotten

the moment he is again taken into favour. He, therefore, who would study to moderate his affections and appetites, through pure love of liberty, strives with all his strength to acquire a knowledge of the virtues and their causes, and to fill his mind with the joy that springs from the perfect apprehension of these; but he never dwells on the vices of mankind; he takes no delight in detraction, and never deceives himself with any false show of freedom.'

The 'Ethics' concludes with a declaration that it is only in virtue that true happiness can be found. Beatitude is not the reward of virtue, but virtue itself; nor do we enjoy true happiness because we restrain our lusts; on the contrary, it is because we enjoy true happiness that we are able to restrain our lusts.

'In what precedes,' finally concludes Spinoza, 'I have delivered all I wished to say in connection with the freedom of the mind. And now we are able to appreciate the wise at their true worth, and to understand how much they are to be preferred to the ignorant, who act from mere appetite or passion. The ignorant man, indeed, besides being agitated in many and various ways by external causes, and never tasting true peace of mind, lives in a state of unconsciousness of himself, of God, and of all things, and only ceases to suffer when he ceases to be; the wise man, on the contrary, in so far as he is truly to be so considered, scarcely knows what mental perturbation means; but conscious of himself, of God, and of that special eternal necessity of things, never ceases from being, but is always in possession of true peace of mind. Should the way I point out as leading to such a conclusion appear extremely difficult, it may nevertheless be found. And that truly must needs be difficult which is so seldom attained. For how should it happen, if the soul's well being were at hand, and to be achieved without great labour, that it is so universally neglected? But all good things are as difficult of attainment as they are rare.'

Such is the high ideal of a perfect life as set forth in the 'Ethics.' When we remember that Spinoza not merely could conceive such an ideal, but that he acted consistently and strictly up to it, it is not difficult, we imagine, for any reader to endorse and acquiesce in the judgment of Mr. Froude: 'It is not often that any man lived a life so well worth writing as Spinoza lived.'

As we have said, Spinoza did not live long enough to see how the 'Ethics' would be received by the public. He deferred publishing it at the time he had completed it, believing it would be wiser, both for his own sake as well as for the better reception of his book, if he waited till a little of the odium caused by the Tractatus had passed away. While he was deferring, however, the inexorable hand of death came upon him, and removed him for ever out of the reach of any praise or blame.

Never very strong, the ardent life of a student had brought on symptoms of pulmonary consumption, and he seems, moreover, to have suffered from the prevailing distemper of his country—intermittent fever. From the beginning of 1674 he appears to have considered himself a confirmed invalid, though he never allowed this to interfere with his prosecution of the work he had in hand. Two years slowly passed by without any improvement, and at the commencement of the year 1677 it was evident his symptoms were becoming aggravated. On February 20, he wrote to his friend Dr. Louis Meyer, of Amsterdam, requesting a visit from him. On the following day, which happened to be a Sunday, though still able to leave his room, he appeared so unusually indisposed, that his kind landlady and her husband were loth to leave him, and offered to remain from church in order to be in readiness to attend upon him. He thanked them warmly for their thoughtfulness, but shrunk from the idea of disturbing in any way the usual course of their devotions, declaring that he did not believe he was more seriously ill than usual, and that his good friend and doctor would be amply sufficient

to attend upon him. They obeyed his wishes very reluctantly, and returned home to find their worst anticipations had been fulfilled. During their absence, Spinoza had been seized with a sudden difficulty of breathing, and had passed away on the afternoon of Sunday, February 21, 1677, aged forty-four years and three months.

CHAPTER VII.

BERKELEY.

FROM Spinoza to Bishop Berkeley seems like taking a great leap. Yet in reality there was but an interval of some fifty years between the ages of the two men. But time is quite as often reckoned by incidents as by years; and it would be scarcely an exaggeration to say that in these fifty years philosophy could count a greater number of brilliant names devoted to her service than in five hundred of the years immediately preceding. When we remember that it was during this period that Descartes, Bacon, Hobbes, Spinoza, Leibnitz, Locke, were either in the commencement or zenith of their fame, to say nothing of smaller names, such us Arnauld, Malebranche and others, who, had they lived in a less rich period of the world's history would not only have deserved but earned some mention in a treatise of this description, it is difficult to believe that so much thought and intellect were spread over so brief a space of time as fifty or sixty years.

The great names of Bacon, Hobbes, and Locke are sufficient to show us that the modern philosophy of the seventeenth century was undergoing the same change as the Grecian philosophy of the Alexandrian school:—Men were becoming weary of the labyrinths of speculative philosophy, of seeking to attain knowledge which seemed persistingly to elude their grasp; there was on all sides a conviction, partly uttered, strongly felt, that the proper study of man was man himself; that it was vain, altogether

useless, to plunge into that ocean of Being which had already engulfed so many sufferers to their fate. Some declared, with a mixture of bitterness and wit, that 'metaphysics should be likened to a virgin, for it is barren, and beareth nought;' and finally, this conviction reached its culmination in Locke, who declared that all philosophy had been begun at the wrong end; that men had 'extended their enquiries beyond their capacity, had let their thoughts wander into the depths wherein they can find no sure footing, and that it was therefore no wonder that they raise questions and multiply disputes, which, never coming to any clear resolution, are proper only to continue and increase their doubts, and to confirm them at last in perfect scepticism. Whereas, were the capacities of our understanding well considered, the extent of our knowledge once discovered, and the horizon found which sets the bounds between the enlightened and the dark part of things, between what is, and what is not comprehensible by us, other men would, perhaps, with less scruple, acquiesce in the avowed ignorance of the one, and employ their thoughts and discourses with some advantage and satisfaction in the other.'

Bacon, Hobbes, and Locke were all Englishmen: and, indeed, practical common sense, and a dislike to speculation and mysticism may be considered a sign or property of English philosophers in contradistinction to the love for metaphysics evinced by their foreign brethren. Those Englishmen, however, who cannot be content with pure negation, may be glad to recollect that Bishop Berkeley though he cannot be called an Englishman, inasmuch as he was born in Ireland, yet was a subject of the British Crown, and passed a considerable portion of his life in London.

With Berkeley philosophy may be said to be again passing into a speculative phase; and though his philosophy is not generally supposed to be pantheistic; though he himself would in all probability not have acknowledged

it to be pantheistic; yet we think we shall be justified, by the passages we shall select from his works, in asserting that Pantheism formed a no inconsiderable portion in the basis of his philosophy.

Mr. Lewes has made a pregnant and suggestive remark —singularly suggestive indeed, when we remember that it comes from a man eminently non-pantheistic in his sentiments—that 'the tendency towards Pantheism is always manifesting itself. This tendency is not merely the offspring of mysticism. It may be recognised in the clear Goethe no less than in the mystical Novalis. In some way or other, Pantheism seems the natural issue of almost every philosophy of religion when rigorously carried out.'

I fully agree in this remark with Mr. Lewes; and Berkeley was but bearing witness to the truth of it in that, being a religious philosopher, he was at the same time necessarily, perhaps almost unconsciously, something of a pantheist.

It has long appeared to me that the only two religious or philosophical systems that have any logical stand-point at all are Pantheism on the one hand, and Pyrrhonism on the other Theism and Atheism both have difficulties far greater, far more unanswerable, than those evinced by Pantheism, great though its difficulties undoubtedly are.

Theism has always appeared to me more as a stage of transition, a temporary resting place in the passage from dogmatic religion to scepticism, than an actual religious phase of itself; quite apart from the moral objections (and I agree with Mr. Mill in thinking such objections enormous), the philosophical aspects of Theism are most difficult, indeed, to me, wholly impossible of comprehension.[1]

[1] I cannot think that Mr. Mill has displayed his usual subtlety of argument in his hypothesis of a limited Creator for the solution of the mystery in which we live. (*See* 'Theism,' in 'Three Essays upon Religion'). The fundamental basis of the so almost universally received belief in the existence of a God, lies in the tendency, I might almost say necessity, there is in the human mind, to postulate a First Cause. But to 'postulate the notion of a limited

Theism, in the ordinary sense of the word, is that creed which (independently of any special revelation, but solely and sufficiently revealed by the works of nature) depicts God as an Omnipotent Being or Person, Creator of, and consequently anterior to, the entire Universe. But nature tells us nothing of any such Being. There are certain parts of the universe of which it is entirely impossible for us to conceive God to have been anterior. By no mental effort that we are capable of employing, are we able to conceive of God as anterior to Space. *For where could He have been (being a person) if space were not ready for his reception?* We must either conclude that space is self-existent—a huge concession to the materialists—or else have recourse to the creed of Pantheism, deny the personality of God, and consequently believe that God is identical, and, therefore, coeternal with space, as He is coeternal with every act and phase of nature. There is nothing in nature itself to tell us of a personal God, outside and apart from nature. Such an idea is a mere subjective dream, a baseless hypothesis, an anthropomorphic creation of our own minds. 'Everybody (says a well-known religious writer, speaking of Theism), everybody must collect from the harmony of the physical universe the existence of a God; but in acknowledging a God we do not thereby acknowledge this peculiar doctrinal conception of a God. We see in the structure of nature a Mind—an Universal Mind—but still a Mind which only operates, and expresses itself by law. Nature only does, and only can inform us of mind *in* nature, the partner and correlative of organised matter. Nature, therefore, can speak to the existence of a God in

Creator is not to postulate a First Cause at all. For the question at once arises: by whom is He limited? There may indeed exist a limited Creator, as there may exist angels or other secondary causes. But none of these can be called a First Cause. They not only must be relegated to the limbo of mere speculation; but they utterly fail to satisfy the demand which is the primary origin of all such speculation:—namely, the necessity there is in the human mind for the postulate of a fundamental Reality or First Cause of all phenomena.

this sense, and can speak to the omnipotence of God in a sense coinciding with the actual facts of nature; but in no other sense does nature witness to the existence of an Omnipotent Supreme Being. Of a Universal Mind out of nature, nature says nothing; and of an omnipotence which does not possess an inherent limit in nature, she says nothing either. And therefore that conception of a Supreme God which represents Him as a Spirit independent of the physical universe, and able from a standing-place external to nature to interrupt its order, is a conception of God for which we must go elsewhere. That conception is obtained from revelation, which is asserted to be proved by miracles, but that being the case, this doctrine of Theism rests itself upon miracles, and therefore miracles cannot rest upon the doctrine of Theism.'[1]

Theism, therefore, or the doctrine of a personal God, solely revealed through the works of nature, has, when rigorously investigated, no logical stand-point whatsoever, and when Bishop Butler undertook to prove that the difficulties of Christianity were not greater than the difficulties of Deism, he was but proving the difficulty, or rather impossibility, of both systems alike. Theism, when logically considered, invariably leads to Pantheism.[2]

[1] Quoted in 'Supernatural Religion,' pp. 64–65.

[2] Mr. Herbert Spencer—a rigid and most thoughtful agnosticist, after demonstrating the difficulties involved in the doctrines both of Atheism and Pantheism, proceeds to expose the baselessness of the doctrine of Theism in the following manner:—

'There remains to be examined the commonly received or theistic hypothesis—creation by external agency. Alike in the rudest creeds and in the cosmogony long current among ourselves, it is assumed that the genesis of the heavens and the earth is effected somewhat after the manner in which a workman shapes a piece of furniture. And this assumption is made not by theologians only, but by the immense majority of philosophers, past and present. Equally in the writings of Plato, and in those of not a few living men of science, we find it taken for granted that there is an analogy between the process of creation and the process of manufacture. Now in the first place, not only is this conception one that cannot by any cumulative process of thought, or the fulfilment of predictions based on it, be shown to answer to

And if Theism be an untenable doctrine, Atheism, we shall find, is not more tenable. For if the logical outcome

anything actual; and not only is it that in the absence of all evidence respecting the process of creation, we have no proof of correspondence even between this limited conception and some limited portion of the fact; but it is that the conception is not even consistent with itself—cannot be realised in thought, when all its assumptions are granted. Though it is true that the proceedings of a human artificer may vaguely symbolise to us a method after which the universe might be shaped, yet they do not help us to comprehend the real mystery; namely, the origin of the material of which the universe consists. The artizan does not make the iron, wood, or stone he uses; but merely fashions and combines them. If we suppose suns, and planets, and satellites, and all they contain, to have been similarly formed by a "Great Artificer," we suppose merely that certain pre-existing elements were thus put into their present arrangement. But whence the pre-existing elements? The comparison helps us not in the least to understand that; and unless it helps us to understand that, it is worthless. The production of matter out of nothing is the real mystery, which neither this simile nor any other enables us to conceive; and a simile which does not enable us to conceive this, may just as well be dispensed with. Still more manifest does the insufficiency of this theory of creation become, when we turn from material objects to that which contains them—when, instead of matter, we contemplate space. Did there exist nothing but an immeasurable void, explanation would be needed as much as now. There would still arise the question—how came it so? If the theory of creation by external agency were an adequate one, it would supply an answer; and its answer would be—space was made in the same manner that matter was made. But the impossibility of conceiving this is so manifest, that no one dares to assert it. For if space was created, it must have been previously non-existent. The non-existence of space cannot, however, by any mental effort be imagined. It is one of the most familiar truths, that the idea of space as surrounding us on all sides, is not for a moment to be got rid of—not only are we compelled to think of space as now everywhere present, but we are unable to conceive its absence either in the past or in the future. And if the non-existence of space is absolutely inconceivable, then, necessarily, its creation is absolutely inconceivable. Lastly, even supposing that the genesis of the universe could really be represented in thought as the result of an external agency, the mystery would be as great as ever; for there would still arise the question—how came there to be an external agency? To account for this only the same three hypotheses are possible—self-existence, self-creation, and creation by external agency. Of these the last is useless: it commits us to an infinite series of such agencies, and even then leaves us where we were. By the second we are practically involved in the same predicament; since, as already shown, self-creation implies an infinite series of potential existences. We are obliged, therefore, to fall back upon the first, which is the one commonly accepted and commonly supposed to be satisfactory. Those who cannot conceive a self-existent universe, and who therefore assume a Creator

of Theism is Pantheism, so the logical outcome of Atheism must be Pyrrhonism. The doctrine of Atheism, if fully investigated, must be pronounced to be as dogmatic as the doctrine of Polytheism; to declare there is no God is as unphilosophical as to declare there are a plurality of Gods. The very outside and furthest doubt to which the true philosopher will subscribe is that he cannot tell whether there be a God or no, and the outcome of such a doctrine is Pyrrhonism; or, as the philosophers of our own day prefer to name it, Agnosticism.[1]

as the source of the universe, take for granted that they can conceive a self-existent Creator. The mystery which they recognise in this great fact surrounding them on every side, they transfer to an alleged source of this great fact; and then suppose that they have solved the mystery. But they delude themselves. As was proved at the outset of the argument, self-existence is rigorously inconceivable; and this holds true whatever be the nature of the object of which it is predicated. Whoever agrees that the atheistic hypothesis is untenable because it involves the impossible idea of self-existence, must perforce admit that the theistic hypothesis is untenable if it contains the same impossible idea.' 'First Principles,' pp. 33–35.

[1] 'Atheism, even from the intellectual point of view,' says M. Comte, 'is a very imperfect form of emancipation; for its tendency is to prolong the metaphysical stage indefinitely, by continuing to seek for new solutions of theological problems, instead of setting aside all inaccessible researches on the ground of their utter inutility. The true positive spirit consists in substituting the study of the invariable laws of phenomena for that of their so-called causes, whether proximate or primary; in a word, in studying the How instead of the Why. Now, this is wholly incompatible with the ambitious and visionary attempts of Atheism to explain the formation of the universe, the origin of animal life, &c. The positivist, comparing the various phases of human speculation, looks upon these scientific chimeras as far less valuable, even from the intellectual point of view, than the first spontaneous inspirations of primeval times. The principle of theology is to explain everything by supernatural Wills. That principle can never be set aside until we acknowledge the search for causes to be beyond our reach, and limit ourselves to the knowledge of laws. As long as men persist in attempting to answer the insoluble questions which occupied the attention of the childhood of our race, by far the more rational plan is to do as was done then, that is, simply to give free play to the imagination. . . . If we insist upon penetrating the unattainable mystery of the essential Cause that produces phenomena, there is no hypothesis more satisfactory than that they proceed from Wills dwelling in them, or outside them; an hypothesis which assimilates them to the effect produced by the desires which exist within ourselves. Were it not for the pride induced by metaphysical and scientific studies, it would be inconceivable that any atheist,

Yet there are many of the most earnest and thoughtful minds to whom this painful Pyrrhonism is not felt as a necessity. They believe that they can see (though darkly indeed at present) some proof of a mind working in and through nature; a sort of *thinking matter* (*Vernunftstoff*) as Lange terms it; a power that makes for righteousness, as Mr. Matthew Arnold prefers to call it; a spirit of progress, which works for the survival of the fittest, as modern science explains it. They believe it to be a not altogether necessary sequence that because the majority of the speculations concerning the nature of God and of Being have hitherto been very wide of the mark, future speculations must be also and always equally wide of the mark. They recall the fact that the Eleatics, disappointed and

modern or ancient, should have believed that his vague hypotheses on such a subject were preferable to this direct mode of explanation. And it was the only mode which really satisfied the reason, until men began to see the utter inanity and inutility of all search for absolute truth. The order of nature is doubtless very imperfect in every respect; but its production would be far more compatible with the hypothesis of an intelligent Will than with that of a blind mechanism. *Persistent atheists, therefore, would seem to be the most illogical of theologists; because they occupy themselves with theological problems, and yet reject the only way of handling them.*' (Dr. Bridges' translation of 'Politique Positive,' vol. i. p. 37.)

Two thinkers, however, who, though they are at one with M. Comte in rejecting the doctrine of Atheism as unphilosophical, and who are certainly not less averse to the transcendental mode of thought than M. Comte himself, by no means agree with him in this entire repudiation of metaphysics, or of the enquiry into primary or proximate Cause. Mr. John Stuart Mill says:—

'England's thinkers are again beginning to see, what they had only temporarily forgotten, that a true psychology is the indispensable scientific basis of morals, of politics, of the science and art of education; that the difficulties of metaphysics lie at the root of all science; that those difficulties can only be quieted by being resolved; and that until they are resolved, positively if possible, but at any rate, negatively, we are never assured that any human knowledge, even physical, stands on solid foundations.' Mill's 'Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy,' p. 2.

And Mr. George Henry Lewes, in his 'Problems of Life and Mind,' says: 'Since it is a fact that we have ideas of matter, force, and cause, and that these words are symbols of sensible experiences, the genesis of such ideas and the interpretation of such symbols are not less legitimate objects of enquiry than the genesis and interpretation of our ideas of animal, plant, planet, or cosmos.'

discouraged at the failure of success by the Ionians in their investigations of physics, had too hastily come to the conclusion that the knowledge of physics was beyond the capability of man, little dreaming of the brilliant physical discoveries that lay in store for the future. And, taking warning by the example, they are resolved to remember that the present non-discovery of any fact does not necessarily presuppose the impossibility of any future discovery.[1]

And so, in spite of Bacon and Hobbes and Locke, Berkeley once more ventured to plunge into this much-abused ocean of Being, and see if he could not be more fortunate than his predecessors.

We shall devote but a few pages to him. He is not generally considered a pantheist. He is chiefly remembered by two qualities: his strong idealism, and his great esteem for the properties of tar-water. He certainly cannot be considered a pantheist in the sense of Spinoza or Bruno, who, both of them, were complete and entire pantheists. And indeed never before or since has Pantheism had a more logical apostle than Spinoza the Jew of Amsterdam. Berkeley was an earnest and most conscientious Christian; at various times of his life he was a missionary, a Dean, and a Bishop. Most probably, had he been accused of Pantheism, he would have repudiated the accusation with honest indignation. Yet that his philosophy was strongly

[1] 'I am extremely loth to imagine,' says the Author of the 'Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation,' 'that there is anything in nature which we should for any reason refrain from examining. If we can infer aught from the past history of science, it is, that the whole of nature is a legitimate field for the exercise of our intellectual faculties; that there is a connection between this knowledge and our well-being; and that, if we may judge from things once despaired of by our enquiring reason, but now made clear and simple, there is none of nature's mysteries which we may not hopefully attempt to penetrate.' The 'Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation.' Eighth edition, pp. 94–95.

And Mr. Darwin says: 'It is those who know little, and not those who know much, who so positively assert that this or that problem will never be solved by science.' 'Introduction to the Descent of Man,' p. 3.

coloured with Pantheism is sufficiently proved, we think, by numerous of his writings.[1]

Take the following paragraphs from the 'Siris,' for instance;—

'Instruments, occasions, and signs occur in, or rather make up, the whole visible course of nature. These, being no agents themselves, are under the direction of one agent concerting all for one end, the supreme good. All those motions, whether in animal bodies or in other parts of the system of nature, which are not effects of particular Wills, seem to spring from the same general cause with the vegetation of plants, an ethereal spirit actuated by a mind.

'259. The first poets and theologers of Greece and the East considered the generation of things as ascribed rather to a Divine Cause, but the *physici* to natural causes subordinate to, and directed still by a Divine; except some corporealists and mechanics, who vainly pretended to make a world without a God. The hidden force that unites, adjusts, and causeth all things to hang together, and move in harmony, which Orpheus and Empedocles styled love; this principle of union is no blind principle, but acts with intellect. This Divine love and intellect are not themselves obvious to our view, or otherwise discerned than in their effects. Intellect enlightens, love connects, and the sovereign good attracts all things.

'263–266. It cannot be denied, that with respect to the universe of things, we in this mortal state are like men educated in Plato's cave, looking on shadows with our backs turned to the light. But though our light be dim, and our situation bad, yet if the best use be made of both, perhaps something may be seen. The Pythagoreans and Platonists had a notion of the true system of the world,

[1] As these sheets are passing through the press I find the above interpretation of Berkeley's philosophy partially confirmed by no less an authority than Mr. Huxley, who in his 'Hume' (recently published in the 'English Men of Letters' series), has observed that in certain parts of his doctrine Berkeley 'makes a perilously close approach' to Spinoza. 'Hume,' p. 166.

They allowed of mechanical principles, but actuated by soul or mind: they distinguished the primary qualities in bodies from the secondary, making the former to be physical causes in a right sense; they saw that a Mind infinite in power, unextended, invisible, immortal, governed, connected, and contained all things; they saw that there was no such thing as real absolute space; that mind, soul, or spirit, truly and really exists; that bodies exist only in a secondary and dependent sense; that the soul is the place of forms: they accurately considered the differences of intellect, rational soul, and sensitive soul. They knew there was a subtle ether pervading the whole mass of corporeal beings, and which was itself actually moved and directed by a mind, and that physical causes were only instruments, or rather marks and signs.

'270. The doctrine of real, absolute, external space induced some modern philosophers to conclude it was a part or attribute of God, or that God himself was space; inasmuch as incommunicable attributes of the Deity appeared to agree thereto, such as infinity, immutability, indivisibility, incorporeity, being uncreated, impassive, without beginning or ending; not considering that all these negative qualities may belong to nothing, for nothing hath no limits, cannot be moved or changed, or divided, is neither created nor destroyed. A different way of thinking appears in the Hermaic as well as other writings of the ancients. With regard to absolute space, it is observed in the Asclepion Dialogue that the word place or space hath by itself no meaning: and again, that it is impossible to understand what space alone or pure space is. And Plotinus acknowledgeth no place but soul or mind, expressly affirming that the soul is not in the world, but the world in the soul.

'273. Blind fate and blind chance are at bottom much the same thing, and one no more intelligible than the other. Such is the mutual relation, connection, motion,

and sympathy of the parts of this world, that they seem, as it were, animated and held together by one soul: and such is their harmony, order, and regular course, as showeth the soul to be governed and directed by a mind.

'279. If nature be supposed the life of the world, animated by one soul, compacted into one frame, and directed and governed in all parts by one Mind; this system cannot be accused of Atheism, though it may, perhaps, of mistake or impropriety. And yet as one presiding Mind gives unity to the infinite aggregate of things, by a mutual communion of actions and passions; and an adjustment of parts, causing all to concur in one view to one and the same end, the ultimate and supreme good of the whole, it should seem reasonable to say, with Ocellus Lucanus the Pythagorean, that as life holds together the bodies of animals, the cause whereof is the soul, and as a city is held together by concord, the cause whereof is law, even so the world is held together, the cause whereof is God.

'284. Alcinous, in his tract of the doctrine of Plato, saith that God hath given the world both mind and soul; others include both in the word soul, and suppose the soul of the world to be God. Philo appears to be of this opinion in several parts of his writings. And Virgil, who was no stranger to the Pythagorean and Platonic tenets, writes to the same purpose. Thus much the schools of Plato and Pythagoras seem agreed in, to wit, that the soul of the world, whether having a distinct mind of its own, or directed by a superior mind, doth embrace all its parts, connect them by an invisible and indissoluble chain, and preserve them ever well adjusted and in good order.

'287. It is a doctrine among other speculations contained in the Hermaic writings, that all things are one. And it is not improbable that Orpheus, Parmenides, and others among the Greeks might have derived their notion of The One from Egypt. Though that subtile metaphysician

Parmenides seems to have added something of his own. If we suppose that one and the same mind is the universal principle of order and harmony throughout the world containing and connecting all its parts, and giving unity to the system, there seems to be nothing impious or atheistical in this supposition.

'291. Thus much it consists with piety to say, that a Divine Agent doth by his virtue permeate and govern the elementary fire or light, which serves as animal spirit to enliven and actuate the whole mass, and all the members of this visible world. Nor is this doctrine less philosophical than pious. We see all nature alive or in motion. We see water turned into air, and air rarefied and made elastic by another medium, more pure, indeed, more subtile, and more volatile than air. But still, as this is a movable, extended, and consequently a corporeal being, it cannot be itself the principle of motion, but leads us naturally and necessarily to an incorporeal spirit or agent. We are conscious that a spirit can begin, alter, or determinate motion, but nothing of this appears in body. Nay, the contrary is evident, both to experiment and reflection.'

Berkeley does not agree with Locke in placing a limit upon the free exercise of the understanding. He has no disposition to sit down in quiet ignorance; but, on the contrary, suspects that we may be too partial in placing the fault originally in our faculties, and not rather in the wrong use we make of them. He believes that God would not have given us the desire for knowledge, unless it were capable of attainment. 'Upon the whole,' he says, 'I am inclined to think that the far greater part, if not all, the difficulties which have hitherto amused philosophers, and blocked up the way to knowledge, are entirely owing to themselves. That we have first raised a dust, and then complain that we cannot see.'

So Berkeley, with a different object in view, imitates Locke in investigating into the principles of human know-

ledge. 'It is evident to anyone who takes a survey of the objects of human knowledge, that they are either ideas actually imprinted on the senses; or else such as are perceived by attending to the passions and operations of the mind; or, lastly, ideas formed by help of memory and imagination, either compounding, dividing, or barely representing those originally perceived in the aforesaid ways.' Either way all objects of knowledge are ideas; but the basis of these ideas is spirit, by which term, as far as we understand Berkeley, God is intended to be implied.

'It seems to be a general pretence of the unthinking herd,' says Berkeley, in his 'Principles of Human Knowledge,' 'that they cannot see God. Could we but see Him, say they, as we see a man, we should believe that He is, and believing obey His commands. But alas! we need only open our eyes to see the sovereign Lord of all things with a more full and clear view than we do any of our fellow-creatures. Not that I imagine that we see God (as some will have it) by a direct and immediate view, or see corporeal things, not by themselves, but by seeing that which represents them in the essence of God, which doctrine is I must confess to me incomprehensible. But I shall explain my meaning. A human spirit or person is not perceived by sense, as not being an idea; when therefore we see the colour, size, figure, and motions of a man, we perceive only certain sensations or ideas excited in our own minds: and these being exhibited to our view in sundry distinct collections, serve to mark out unto us the existence of finite and created spirits like ourselves. Hence it is plain we do not see a man, if by *man* is meant that which lives, moves, perceives, and thinks as we do; but only such a certain collection of ideas, as directs us to think there is a distinct principle of thought and motion like to ourselves, accompanying and represented by it. And after the same manner we see God; all the difference is, that whereas some one finite and narrow assemblage of ideas

denotes a particular human mind, whithersoever we direct our view, we do at all times and in all places perceive manifest tokens of the Divinity; everything we see, hear, feel, or anywise perceive by sense, being a sign or effect of the power of God, as is our perception of those very motions which are produced by men.

'It is therefore plain, that nothing be more evident to anyone that is capable of the least reflection, than the existence of God, or a Spirit who is intimately present to our minds, producing in them all that variety of ideas or sensations which continually affect us, on whom we have an absolute and entire dependence, in short, "in whom we live, and move, and have our being." That the discovery of this great truth which lies so near and obvious to the mind, should be attained to by the reason of so very few, is a sad instance of the stupidity and inattention of men, who, though they are surrounded with such clear manifestations of the Deity, are yet so little affected by them, that they seem, as it were, blinded with excess of light.

'But, you will say, hath nature no share in the production of natural things, and must they be all ascribed to the immediate and sole operation of God? I answer, if by *nature* is meant only the visible *series* of effects or sensations on our minds, according to certain fixed and general laws, then it is plain that nature, taken in this sense, cannot produce anything at all. But if by *nature* is meant some being distinct from God, as well as from the laws of nature and things perceived by sense, I must confess that word is to me an empty sound, without any intelligible meaning annexed to it. Nature, in this acceptation, is a vain chimera introduced by those heathens who had not just notions of the omnipresence and infinite perfection of God. But it is more unaccountable that it should be received among Christians professing belief in the Holy Scriptures, which constantly ascribe those effects to the immediate hand of God that heathen philosophers are wont to impute to nature. "The Lord causeth the vapours to ascend." "He

turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night." "He visiteth the earth, and maketh it soft with showers," &c. &c. But notwithstanding that this is the constant language of Scripture, yet we have I know not what aversion from believing that God concerns himself so nearly in our affairs. Fain would we suppose Him at a great distance off, and substitute some blind unthinking deputy instead, though (if we may believe St. Paul), "He be not far from every one of us."

'It will, I doubt not, be objected, that the slow and gradual methods observed in the production of natural things do not seem to have for their cause the immediate hand of an *Almighty Agent.* Besides, monsters, untimely births, fruits blasted in the blossom, rains falling in desert places, miseries incident to human life, are so many arguments that the whole frame of nature is not immediately actuated and superintended by a Spirit of infinite wisdom and goodness. But the answer to this objection is in a good measure made plain when we remember that the aforesaid methods of nature are absolutely necessary, in order to work by the most simple and general rules, and after a steady and consistent manner; which argues both the goodness and wisdom of God. Such is the artificial contrivance of this mighty machine of nature, that whilst its motions and various phenomena strike on our senses, the hand which actuates the whole is itself unperceivable to men of flesh and blood. "Verily (saith the prophet), thou art a God which hidest thyself." But though God conceal himself from the eyes of the sensual and lazy, who will not be at the least expense of thought, yet to an unbiassed and attentive mind, nothing can be more plainly legible than the intimate presence of an all-wise Spirit, who fashions, regulates, and sustains the whole system of being. . . . We ought, therefore, to meditate and earnestly remember "that the eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good; that He is with us, and keepeth us in all places whither we go, and giveth us bread

to eat and raiment to put on;" that He is present and conscious to our innermost thoughts, and that we have a most absolute and immediate dependence upon Him.'

'For can there be a nicer strain of abstraction (says Berkeley in another part of 'The Principles of Human Knowledge'), than to distinguish the existence of sensible objects from their being perceived, so as to conceive them existing unperceived? Light and colours, heat and cold, extension and figures—in a word, the things we see and feel—what are they but so many sensations, notions, ideas, or impressions on the sense; and is it not impossible to separate, even in thought, any of these in perception? For my part, I might as easily divide a thing from itself. I may indeed divide in my thoughts, or conceive apart from each other, those things which perhaps I never perceived by sense so divided. Thus I imagine the trunk of the human body without the limbs, or conceive the smell of a rose without thinking of the rose itself. So far I will not deny that I can abstract, if that be properly called abstraction which extends only to the conceiving separately such objects as it is possible may really exist, or be actually perceived asunder; but my conceiving or imagining power does not extend beyond the possibility of real existence or perception Hence, as it is impossible for me to see or feel anything without an actual sensation of that thing, so it is impossible for me to conceive in my thoughts any sensible thing or object distinct from the sensation or perception of it. In truth, the object and the sensation are the same thing, and cannot therefore be abstracted from one another. . . .

'In a word, all the choir of heaven, and furniture of earth—all those bodies which compose the mighty frame of the world—have not any subsistence without a mind: their *esse* is to be perceived and known; and consequently, so long as they are not actually perceived by me, or do not exist in my mind, or that of any other created spirit, they must either have no existence at all, or *else subsist in the mind of some Eternal Spirit.*'

We will not dwell much longer upon the philosophy of Berkeley. Enough has been quoted to show, that though not a pantheist in the sense, or to the extent, of Giordano Bruno and Spinoza, yet his philosophy was strongly tinged with the spirit of Pantheism.

In his moral character he very nearly equalled Spinoza. 'There are few men,' says Mr. Lewes, 'of whom England has better reason to be proud than of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne. To extraordinary merits as a writer and thinker, he united the most exquisite purity and generosity of character; and it is still a moot point whether he was greater in head or heart.' Even the satirist Pope—not over given to the praise of anyone—owned with fervour that Berkeley was possessed of every virtue under heaven. He was under thirty when he brought out his 'Principles of Human Knowledge,' which made an epoch in metaphysics. He was welcomed warmly to England. Flattered, caressed, treated with a respect, almost with an adulation, that would have bewildered many an older head; yet nothing seemed to have the power of elating him, or turning him from his modest, sober estimation of his own powers. Even the fastidious Atterbury said, after an interview with him, 'So much learning, so much knowledge, so much innocence, and such humility, I did not think had been the portion of any but angels till I saw this gentleman.' He resigned the deanery of Derry, which was worth eleven hundred pounds a year, in order to dedicate his life to the conversion of the North American savages, stipulating only with the Government for a salary of one hundred pounds a year. The expedition was not a successful one, and after an absence of seven years he returned to England, having spent the greater portion of his fortune in vain. In 1734 he was raised to the bishopric of Cloyne, which he retained nearly twenty years. In 1752 he removed to Oxford; and, in the following year was seized, while reading, with a sudden palsy of the heart, and died almost instantaneously.

CHAPTER VIII.

LESSING.

FROM Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne, to Lessing, play-writer and boon companion of actors, is a somewhat strange transition—a transition nevertheless that becomes very suggestive when we remember that Pantheism is as much displayed in the writings of the play-writer as in those of the bishop. More so, indeed, we might almost say; for the Pantheism of the bishop was, as we have seen, more or less unconscious, whereas that of the dramatist was wholly conscious and embraced after mature deliberation. Jacobi relates a conversation between himself and Lessing in which the latter, then between forty and fifty years of age, is represented as acknowledging himself to be a firm believer in the doctrines of Spinoza.

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing was born on January 22, 1729. Kamentz, a small town in Upper Lusatia, had the dignity of being his birthplace. His father was one of the Lutheran clergymen of Kamentz, and had afterwards the honour of becoming its pastor primarius or head pastor. His mother was the daughter of the previous chief pastor of this same Kamentz. So that on both sides of his family Gotthold Lessing may be said to have had a somewhat theological ancestry; and it was the cherished wish of both parents that this their eldest son should devote himself to the hereditary profession of the family.

Young Lessing was one of twelve children; and as the income of even a chief pastor was not in those days very

excessive, his parents could not hope to provide either himself or his brothers and sisters with a very exhaustive education. Luckily for Lessing, he was even as a young child endowed with a more than ordinary share of ability, so that he was enabled to be the successful competitor for a scholarship in one of the principal schools in Saxony. To this school, called St. Afra, he was duly sent in the summer of 1741. Here he studied diligently for some five or six years, attracting unusual attention by his exceptional talents. 'Tasks which others find too hard,' writes the principal of the school to his father, 'are child's play to him.'

At about seventeen years of age he left school, and in 1746 proceeded to the University of Leipzig. The change between the quiet retired school and the bustle and gaiety of the large town was at first too much for Lessing. He was filled with an almost painful consciousness of his own ignorance of the great world; and out of shyness and the *mauvaise honte* not unusual in youth, kept very much to himself, seeking no friends, and repelling the advances of any who might wish to seek him. He wrote to his mother that he 'was always among books; occupied only with myself, I thought of other men as seldom perhaps as of God.'

But after a time this shyness seemed to wear off. Or, perhaps it might be more just to say, his intellect was sufficiently penetrating to make him conscious that books could but provide him with second-hand knowledge; through their agency he could but become acquainted with the opinions of others. It was now time for him to see the world for himself, so as to be able to form his own opinions. 'I found,' he wrote to his mother, 'that books might make me learned, but would never make a man of me. I ventured out of my room among my fellows. Good God! what an inequality I felt between myself and others! Rustic shyness, a stiff and ungainly body, complete ignorance of polite manners; hateful airs which made every-

one think I despised him, these were, in my own judgment, my good qualities.'

He forthwith commenced a regular series of lessons in dancing, fencing, vaulting, &c. in order that his stiff and ungainly figure should acquire habits of grace and ease; and instead of the delight in books evinced by him in his boyhood, became more irregular in his attendance at lectures &c., than were the majority of the young men. This conduct in Lessing was the natural reaction of youth after a very dull and monotonous childhood. His parents, tender and conscientious though they were, were narrow and prejudiced. And Lessing at the age of seventeen found on his entrance into Leipzig that he knew almost as little of the world as if he had been seven.

Knowledge of the world was now his great ambition: and the classes of men most likely in his opinion to provide him with this were actors, officers, and literary people. Among acquaintances of this description must especially be mentioned one.

Living at that time in Leipzig was a young man, Mylius by name, and a near connection of Lessing's: but in spite of the relationship, Mylius had managed so to offend the elder Lessing that he and Gotthold were almost strangers. The cause of offence was as follows:—

When Lessing was at the Kamentz school, the Principal, or Rector as he was called, a young man fresh from Leipzig, had ventured to publish a small work on 'The Theatre as a School of Eloquence.' The indignation of the prejudiced little town of Kamentz can be imagined. Even in our own day, the theatre is not much patronised by theologians or clerical professors; in those days it was believed by them to be the pit of hell; it was a synonym for everything vile and pernicious, its only aim being in their opinion to beguile ignorant youth to eternal perdition. For an instructor of youth to venture to lift up his voice in its defence was an act of unheard-of depravity. The

magistrates rebuked the offender; and the elder Lessing publicly denounced from his pulpit such dangerous doctrines. But when, about a year afterwards, the Rector left Kamentz, Mylius, who had then been about a year at Leipzig, addressed to him a number of verses, congratulating him on his departure from so ignorant a town, and ridiculing not only the magistrates but the pastor. From this time until Lessing met him at Leipsic, Mylius and the Lessings never seem to have spoken.

By the time Gotthold entered as a student Mylius had become a sort of notorious character at Leipzig. He was accustomed to go about unkempt and untidy, with his coat tattered and his shoes down at heel. He was clever and eccentric, but not exactly the character anxious parents would care to seek as an associate of a beloved son. He was in the habit of writing plays; and was the editor of one or two papers, more or less free in their tone. In every way he was inferior to Lessing; nevertheless the youth was powerfully attracted by him, and to the terror and indignation of his parents struck up a violent friendship with him which was to last for many years. Lessing began soon to write dramas as well as his friend, one or two of which were put on the stage. His father in vain wrote to him, trying to wean him from such pursuits. At last the good pastor, believing the gravity of the occasion fully excused the means he employed, had recourse to a pious fraud, for anything in his opinion was better than allowing the lad to be further guided by the evil counsels of Mylius. He penned, therefore, to his erring son the following letter:—'On receipt of this, take your place in the mail-coach at once, and come to us. Your mother is dangerously ill, and wishes to speak to you before she dies.'

Young Lessing, half suspecting a trick, immediately set off for his home, only to find on arriving there that his mother was in as good health as she had ever been. But

he was too attached to his parents to show any annoyance at the trick that had been practised upon him. 'Dearest mother,' was his only remark, 'I suspected you were not ill, and I am heartily glad you are not.' He remained at home about three months, comporting himself so tenderly and affectionately that his parents not only forgave him, but consented to pay his debts. He told them, however, that his religious views had undergone such a change as to render it impossible for him to become a clergyman. Bitter as was the disappointment to them, they yet had a too high idea of the sacredness of the profession to desire it to be adopted by one whom they could not help owning to themselves was not worthy of it. It was in consequence arranged that he should study medicine and philosophy, with a view to attaining a position at the university.

He returned therefore to Leipzig, and adopted the title of a medical student, though in reality he paid as little attention to his medical studies as he had to his theological. The theatre and the drama still absorbed him, and Mylius was still his boon companion. His parents were offended beyond measure, and peremptorily ordered him to return home. But Lessing refused, gently and courteously it is true, but firmly. He said he was of an age to select a profession for himself, and literature was the one he intended to adopt. His father again wrote, flinging at him in scorn the anticipation that he would one day be a 'German Molière.'

'If I could justly claim the title of a "German Molière,"' wrote back Lessing, good-humouredly, 'I should certainly be assured of an immortal name. To confess the truth, I have a strong wish to deserve it; but his greatness and my weakness are two things which may cause the strongest wish to be disappointed.'

'I thank you for this proof of your kindness,' wrote Lessing, shortly afterwards,[1] in return for a little money

[1] Quoted by Mr. J. Sime in his 'Life of Lessing,' vol. i. pp. 72, 73.

that had been sent him, 'and I should say much more if I did not unfortunately see too clearly from your letters that you have been for some time accustomed to think of me everything that is lowest, most shameful, and most godless. The thanks of a man of whom you have these prejudiced opinions cannot be otherwise than unpleasant to you. But what can I do in the matter? Shall I copiously excuse myself? Shall I rage at my calumniators and in revenge disclose their weaknesses? Shall I call my conscience, shall I call God to witness? It would be necessary to have less morality in my actions than I really have to let myself be so far misled. But time will judge. Time will show whether I have respect for my parents, conviction in my religion, and morality in my mode of life. Time will judge which is the better Christian—he who recalls and talks of the principles of the Christian religion, often without understanding them, goes to church, and attends to all the ceremonies because they are usual; or he who has once cautiously doubted, and by the path of investigation has attained conviction, or at any rate strives to attain it.[1] The Christian religion is not something which a man can accept on the word of his parents. Most people, indeed, inherit it like their fortune; but they show by their conduct what sort of Christians they are. Whilst I see that the principal command of Christianity, to love one's enemies, is disregarded, I shall doubt whether those who give themselves out as Christians deserve that name.'

Perceiving, though with extreme reluctance, that their son's mind was made up upon the subject of his profession, his parents felt they must yield to the inevitable, and Lessing proceeded on his path with little further molestation.

For some eight or ten years he worked diligently at

[1] The above passage puts us somewhat in mind of that very thoughtful saying of Novalis:—'To become properly acquainted with a truth, we must first have disbelieved it, and disputed against it.'

the composition of plays and dramas; but received so little pecuniary remuneration for them that he was very often nearly on the brink of starvation. During this period he was fortunate in two events that occurred. One was in the death of Mylius, who, though not without good points, was undoubtedly not a very desirable friend for one of Lessing's disposition. The other was in an event which took place some five or six years prior to the death of Mylius. It was the introduction of Lessing to the young Jew philosopher, Moses Mendelssohn. This latter was a man about Lessing's own age, very unworldly, and highminded, thoughtful, accomplished, and wonderfully industrious; in all things a striking contrast to Mylius, and Mendelssohn was destined to exert as beneficial an influence over Lessing's career as that of Mylius had been unfortunate.

It was to Mendelssohn that Lessing invariably unburthened himself whenever his conscience reproached him for his desultoriness and general unsteadiness. The only absolute vice to which Lessing had ever yielded was that of gaming; and Mendelssohn was unwearying in his endeavours to wean him from it. Yet when he was away from Mendelssohn's influence the temptation seems at times too strong for him to be able to resist; though he was always filled with remorse afterwards for having spent his time so unprofitably.

'Most sorrowfully I confess,' he wrote to Mendelssohn after one of his gaming evenings, 'that hitherto I have been anything but happy. I must, however, confess this, because it is the sole reason why I have not written to you for so long a time. I have written to you from here only once, have I not? You may therefore boldly wager that I have only once rightly come to myself. No! I could not have foreseen that. Ah, my best friend, your Lessing is lost! By and by you will no more know him; he will not know himself. Oh, my time, my time, my all that I have—to sacrifice it in this way, I know not for what objects!

A hundred times I have thought of forcibly tearing myself away from this connection. Yet is it possible to make good one inconsiderate act by another.' Perhaps, however, this is only one of those dark days in which nothing reveals itself to me in its true light. To-morrow, perhaps, I shall write to you more cheerfully. Oh, write to me often, but more than mere scoldings for my silence. Your letters are to me a true alms; and will you give alms only for recompence? Farewell, my dearest friend; the first good hour which my discontent leaves me shall certainly be yours. I am looking forward to it with all the restless longing of a fanatic awaiting heavenly manifestations.'

Moses Mendelssohn was the son of a Hebrew schoolmaster, who, notwithstanding his poverty, had managed to give his boy a good elementary training, especially in Hebrew and Rabbinical lore. A treatise of Maimonides first awoke independent thoughts in the lad, and he studied so incessantly that he brought on a nervous spinal disease, which afflicted him, in more or less degree, during the whole of his life.

When Lessing first knew him he was just twenty-four years of age, engaged during the daytime in the occupations of a clerk, and only able to devote the early mornings or late evenings to study. Lessing offered to teach him Greek, and it soon became an established thing that Mendelssohn should come to Lessing's lodging every morning between seven and nine, when they discussed all kinds of philosophical and literary subjects. Mendelssohn became in after years the emancipator of his people from the undeserved opprobrium with which they had been for so many centuries visited; and in return was so prized by them, that it became a current saying among them that 'from Moses to Moses there was none like Moses.' Lessing and Mendelssohn mutually exercised a beneficial influence over each other. Mendelssohn suffered from a too great diffidence in his own powers. Lessing's keen insight foresaw

his friend's future eminence, and shortly after their first acquaintance he wrote of him :—

'I regard him in advance as an honour to his nation. His probity and his philosophical spirit make me consider him in advance as a second Spinoza, who wants nothing save his errors for perfect equality.'

If Lessing's encouragement acted upon Mendelssohn as the stimulus necessary for the conquest of his diffidence, Mendelssohn, on his part, acted, as we have seen, as a sort of steadying balance to his friend's somewhat erratic impulses ; and Lessing was too noble ever to resent his young monitor's interference ; given, as he could not but feel, from purely disinterested and unselfish motives. If reproaches failed to wean him from his unfortunate propensity for gaming, Mendelssohn did not scruple at times to have recourse to that species of gentle irony, which with some natures has so much more effect than undisguised remonstrance. And on one occasion, when Lessing seemed to be yielding up all his nobler pursuits for the indulgence of this one vice, Mendelssohn had recourse to the somewhat singular expedient of writing an ironical dedication to a philosophical work he was about to bring out. The dedication was of course only inserted in the copy intended for Lessing, and ran as follows :—[1]

'*Dedication to a Singular Mortal.*

'The authors who worship the public, complain that their deity is deaf. They may adore it, pray to it, call on it from morn to noon, without voice or answer. I lay my pages at the feet of an idol who is obstinate enough to be equally hard of hearing. I have called, and he does not answer. I now accuse him before the deaf judge, the public, who often pronounces just sentence without hearing.

'Mockers say, Call aloud. He is rhyming, is busy, has

[1] Quoted by Miss Zimmern in her 'Life of Lessing,' pp. 144, 145.

gone into the fields, or peradventure he sleepeth; call louder, that he may awake. Oh no! rhyme he can, but alas! he will not: roam he would gladly, but he cannot. His spirit is too lively for sleep, too idle for business. Formerly his seriousness was the oracle of the wise, and his irony a rod on the back of the fool, but now the oracle is dumb, and the fools exult with impunity. He has resigned his scourge to others, but they smite too gently, for they fear to draw blood.

'And he—

> If he neither hears, nor speaks, nor feels,
> Nor sees, what does he then? he plays!'

In his domestic life Lessing was singularly blameless. In spite of the temporary coldness between himself and his parents through his adoption of literature as a profession, no son could have been more devoted than he was. He contributed largely to their support, as well as to that of his numerous brothers and sisters, even though by so doing he had almost to deny himself the bare necessities of existence. His wife, a widow when he married her, was tenderly cherished by him, and nothing could exceed his devotion to her during her lifetime, nor the protecting care he extended to her children after her decease.

Yet in spite of his generosity to his own relatives, he never refused to extend the same to strangers if he had but the wherewithal to carry out his generous intentions. He often indeed carried almsgiving and support of others to a somewhat foolish extent, for not only by such means was he prevented from saving for his own old age, but he had frequently to run into debt in order to gratify his generous instincts. An anecdote is related of him that plainly shows how ready he was to help any that were in distress or sorrow. He never cared to make any investigation into the truth of their story. They were in trouble; that was enough for him.

The anecdote is as follows :—

A ragged, hungry-looking man, accompanied by a large dirty dog, called at his door one day, and asked for help. 'Who and what are you?' asked Lessing. 'A philosopher,' was the answer; 'I write on the higher destiny of man, but I have neither shelter nor bread. Give me a room in your house, and necessary food, and I shall here complete my book.' Lessing looked through the dirty manuscript he pulled out of his pocket, and found it to be not even grammatical. He good-humouredly pointed out to the so-called 'philosopher' some of the most glaring errors. 'I know them all,' replied the man, 'but I can intimate in the preface that I do not understand these things.' Without further argument, Lessing took both him and his dog into his house, and for five months entirely supported them. He would have kept them much longer had the dog's master consented to stay. When his friends remonstrated with him upon this somewhat foolish generosity, he replied: 'As long as I have a roll left, the "philosopher" shall have half of it.' When the winter was over, however, the monotony of Lessing's house became unbearable to the stranger, and without waiting to consult his benefactor's convenience, he suddenly said one day, 'To-morrow I shall be off.' Lessing immediately gave him some money to provide for any journey he might contemplate; and the next morning, before any of the family had arisen, the stranger and the dog had disappeared.

Another anecdote relates the fact of Lessing contributing to the support of a man, utterly unknown to him, who had been thrown (in the opinion of Lessing unjustly) into prison. He visited him constantly while he was in gaol, and after his release received him into his house in order that his health might be recruited, ultimately paying for his journey to Berlin, providing him with a note of introduction to Mendelssohn.

Yet adored though he was by the poor and unhappy,

Lessing cannot on the whole be considered a popular man; and the chief cause of this unpopularity may be traced, we think, to the strong propensity he possessed for indulging in religious controversy. It might have been, perhaps, owing to his theological ancestry, but there is little doubt, that, next to the drama, theology occupied the greater portion of his mind. He comes before us much more frequently as a theologian than a philosopher. But as theologians are for the most part more bitter as well as less reasonable than philosophers, he attracted far more enmity than if he had directed his arguments against the latter instead of the former class of thinkers.

His principal controversial opponent was a Hamburg pastor of the name of Goeze; and it would be difficult to say which was the most virulent in his expressions, Lessing or the pastor. The pastor may perhaps have really experienced the greatest personal animosity; for a large portion of Lessing's apparent earnestness arose from real delight in anything pertaining to controversy; but in their expressions they were both equally bitter, though Lessing, being gifted with the superior ability, seems to have come out victor in the dispute.

The pursuit of truth was a passion with him; but the interest was in the pursuit, not in the possession. 'Not the truth,' he wrote, 'of which a man is, or believes himself to be possessed, but the sincere effort he has made to come behind the truth, makes the worth of the man. For not through the possession but through the investigation of truth does he develop those energies in which alone consists his ever-growing perfection. Possession makes the mind stagnant, indolent, proud. If God held enclosed in His right hand all truth, and in His left simply the ever-moving impulse towards truth, although with the condition that I should eternally err, and said to me, "Choose!" I should humbly bow before his left hand, and say, "Father, give! Pure truth is for Thee alone!"'

In his philosophical opinions Lessing was partly a follower of Leibnitz, partly of Spinoza. He resembled Leibnitz in his optimism, fully agreeing with that philosopher in his celebrated assertion that 'this world was the best of all possible worlds.' His point of resemblance with Spinoza lay in his acceptance of the doctrine that all things are contained in God.

There is a little paper written by him, entitled 'Concerning the Reality of Things out of God,' in which his pantheistic opinions are very clearly expressed. 'Explain to myself the reality of things out of God as I may,' he says, 'I must confess that I can form no idea of it. If it is called the complement of possibility, I ask, is there or is there not an idea in God of this complement of possibility? Who will maintain that there is not? If, however, there is an idea of it in Him, the thing itself is in Him, all things are real in Him. But, it will be said, the idea which God has of the reality of a thing does not destroy the reality of a thing out of Him. Does it not? Then reality out of Him must have something which distinguishes it from reality in His idea. That is: in reality out of Him there must be something of which God has no idea. An absurdity! But if there is nothing of this kind, if, in the idea which God has of the reality of a thing, all is contained that is to be found in this reality out of Him, then both realities are one, and everything said to exist out of God exists in God. Or let it be said: the reality of a thing is the sum of all possible limitations to which it may be exposed. Must not this sum be also in the idea of God? What limitation has the real thing out of Him, of which the ideal was not in God? Consequently this ideal is the thing itself; to say that the thing out of Him exists out of this ideal is to double the ideal in a manner as unnecessary as absurd.'

Lessing was indefatigable in trying to imbue his contemporaries with a spirit of toleration; although it must

be admitted that he himself was not always very lenient to such as held strictly orthodox opinions.

'The thing we call heretic,' he says,[1] 'has one very good side. It means a person who has at least wished to see with his own eyes. The question is only whether the eyes were good. In certain centuries the name heretic was even the greatest recommendation a learned man could present to posterity, greater even than the names magus, magician, exorcisor; for among these there was many an impostor. I do not know whether it is a duty to sacrifice happiness and life to truth; at any rate the courage and determination it requires are not gifts which we can give to ourselves. But this I know to be a duty, that if we desire to teach truth we must teach it wholly or not at all; clear, round, without riddle, without reserve, without doubt as to its power and utility; and the gifts that this requires lie in our own control. Whoever will not attain these, or when he has attained them will not use them, serves human reason badly, if he takes from us gross errors while reserving from us the whole truth, and trying to satisfy us with a middle course of truth and lies. For the more gross the error, the shorter and more direct the road to truth; while, on the other hand, subtle errors may keep us eternally removed from truth, seeing it is more difficult to recognise that they are errors.'

The inculcation of toleration is the guiding principle in Lessing's great drama, entitled 'Nathan the Wise'; and as the apostle of toleration he has purposely selected one from a race that is generally supposed to be of all races the most exclusive on the face of the earth—the Jewish. Indeed, whether by accident or of set purpose, the most intolerant and narrow-minded of all the *dramatis personæ* throughout this drama Lessing has portrayed as Christian. Both Nathan the Jew and Saladin the Mussulman stand out in striking superiority to all the Christian characters.

[1] Quoted by Miss Zimmern in her 'Life of Lessing,' p. 263.

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Saladin, seeking to learn from Nathan his opinion as to which of the three great religions is the true one, elicits from him his opinion under the following allegory:—

In days of yore there lived an Oriental who owned a ring of priceless value, that had the hidden virtue to make its owner beloved of God and men. It never left his hand, and on his death he made a disposition that should secure it as an heirloom in his house for ever to his best-loved son. Thus it passed from hand to hand for generations until it came to a father with three sons, all equally dear to his heart. His end is near. In turn he promises each son the ring, as each one seems to him in turn the dearest. At last, in dire perplexity, he summons a jeweller, and orders two more such rings made exactly after this pattern. When made, he himself cannot distinguish the true one. Overjoyed, he calls his sons, gives each a ring and his blessing, and dies content. What follows can be guessed. Each son claims to be lord on the strength of his ring; disputes, discussions follow, the true ring cannot be distinguished, as little as among ourselves the true religion.

'Is it thus you answer me?' says Saladin.

'I but seek to excuse myself from hazarding a distinction between three rings made purposely so much alike.'

'True, true, the rings—you trifle with me—but not the creeds. Their differences are distinctly marked, even to meat, drink, and dress.'

'But only not as to their ground of proof. Are they not all built alike on history, written or traditional, that must be received on trust; and whose trust do we naturally question least, but that of our family and our forefathers from whom we sprang? Can I ask of you to convict your forefathers of falsehood, in order to render credit to mine? Surely the same holds good for Christians?'

'By the Almighty the man is right,' thought Saladin, and then entreated the Jew to proceed with his allegory.

The end of the dispute between the brothers was that

none of them could come to any agreement, so determined upon proceeding to law. Each swore in turn that his father had loved him best and given him his ring, and each asserted that his father would never have played him false. He would rather suspect that his brothers had been guilty of foul play. The judge said he must dismiss the suit, since they cannot produce the father, who alone could decide. But stay, he remembers the true ring has the power to make its owner beloved by God and men; the counterfeit can have no such virtue. 'Say then, which of you do two brothers love the best? You are silent. Each loves himself the best. The rings act inwardly alone, not outwardly. Go, go; you are all three deceived deceivers, the real ring perchance was lost, and to conceal the loss, your father ordered three for one. And now if you desire my counsel instead of my judgment, I say to you, rest with the matter as it stands. Each of you has received a ring; let each one deem his true, and make it true by trying who can display most gentleness, forbearance, charity, united to heartfelt resignation to God's will. It may be that your father no longer desired to tolerate the exclusive tyranny of one ring, and loving you all would not favour one son to the prejudice of others. Be that as it may, do you each strive as I have said. If after a thousand thousand years the virtues of the ring continue to show themselves in your children's children, perchance one wiser than I will sit on this judgment seat who can decide.

This poem of 'Nathan the Wise' has won the admiration of some of the greatest thinkers of the day—not so much for its poetical genius as for its deep philosophical insight. Dr. D. F. Strauss says of it:—

'Creations like the "Nathan," coming to us as from a better world, wherein opposites are for ever reconciled, and the differences that still so aimlessly divide mankind are set at rest, are not given to us for purposeless enjoyment or mere æsthetic contemplation. Much rather are they

ours as pledges that the battle of life, fairly and fearlessly waged, is ever eventually crowned by victory, that humanity, however slowly, and with whatever occasional backslidings, still advances from darkness into light, from bondage into freedom; and further, that he only counts for one among the combatants who in some wider or narrower sphere shows himself forward to hasten the coming of this glorious day, the advent of this kingdom of God upon earth.'

And Dr. Kuno Fischer, in his 'History of Modern Philosophy,' has remarked:—

'Whoever would see religion set forth in the spirit of Spinoza has only to look into "Nathan the Wise."'

Indeed, Lessing may be almost considered as the first author of any importance who perceived the full pregnancy of Spinoza's teaching. In the discussion between Lessing and Jacobi, the former enters somewhat largely into his complete appreciation of it.

'The orthodox ideas concerning God,' says Lessing, 'are no longer mine. I have no pleasure in them. Ἓν καὶ πᾶν! One and all. I know nothing but this.'

Jacobi. 'Then you are greatly at one with Spinoza?'

Lessing. 'Did I rank myself with anyone, it were with none but him.'

Jacobi. 'Spinoza is well enough; yet it is but a sorry sort of healing we find in his name.'

Lessing. 'Well, be it so! and yet know you of anything better?'

The conversation is here interrupted; but the next day Lessing entered Jacobi's room somewhat abruptly, saying, 'I have come to speak with you further concerning my Ἓν καὶ πᾶν. You were alarmed yesterday?'

Jacobi. 'You took me by surprise; I was confused, not alarmed; for truly I had no idea that I should find a Spinozist and pantheist in you, and still more that you should speak so unreservedly as you did. One great object of my visit here was to find help from you against Spinoza.'

Lessing. 'You know Spinoza then?'

Jacobi. 'I believe I know him as but few have taken the pains to know him.'

Lessing. 'Then is there no help for you! Rather be his friend entirely. There is no philosophy but the philosophy of Spinoza.'

Jacobi. 'This may be true. For the Determinist, if he would be consequent, must be the Fatalist as well; and all that then follows is clear to view.'

Lessing. 'I see we understand each other. I am therefore all the more anxious to hear from you what you regard as the spirit of Spinozism—I mean that which was in Spinoza himself.'

Jacobi. 'It was no other, I apprehend, than the old *a nihilo nihil fit*, which Spinoza brought prominently forward, in conformity with deduced ideas, as the speculative Cabbalists and others before him had done. But for me, my *credo* is not in Spinoza, for I believe in an intelligent personal Cause of the world.'

Lessing entreats Jacobi to unfold to him his reasons for rejecting Spinoza; and enquires what there is in nature to lead him to conceive of the First Cause as a person.

'The whole matter lies in this,' replied Jacobi, 'that from fatalism I conclude immediately against fatalism, as against everything connected with it. If there be efficient causes only, and no final causes, then has the thinking power no part to play in nature save as looker-on; its only business were to attend on the mechanism of the acting causes. The conversation we now hold were but a desire or faculty of our bodies; and the whole import of our talk, reduced to its elements, nothing but extension, motion, and grades of celerity, with ideas of these, and ideas of these ideas superadded. I know not how to controvert the man who entertains such opinions; but he who cannot go along with him is at the antipodes of Spinozism. The emotions and passions do not act in so far as they

are feeling and thoughts ; or rather, in so far as they carry feelings and thoughts along with them ; we only believe that we act from love, hate, pity, magnanimity, or from rational motives.'

Lessing. 'I perceive ; you would like to have your will free. I, for my part, desire no free will. Generally all you have said does not alarm me in the least. It is one of the prejudices of mankind that they regard thought as the first and most excellent of their faculties, and are disposed to derive everything from it. But all—ideas inclusive, depends on higher principles. Space, motion, thought, are obviously based on a higher force, a force that is by no means exhausted when these are named. It must be infinitely more excellent than this or that, or any effect, and so may have a kind of enjoyment attached to it which not only far surpasses our comprehension, but which lies without the sphere of comprehension entirely. That we can form no conception of it does not annul its possibility.'

Jacobi. 'You go further than Spinoza. He held understanding to be supreme.'

Lessing. 'For man! But he was very far from holding our miserable way of acting for ends as the most excellent method, and throwing thought into the bargain.'

Jacobi. 'Understanding, with Spinoza, is the better part in all finite natures, because it is the part whereby each finite nature transcends its finiteness. It might be said that he in some sort ascribes two souls to each existing thing, one having reference to the present particular thing, the other to the universe of things. To this second soul he also ascribes immortality. But all he conceives as pertaining to the One Infinite Substance, has in itself and apart from individual things no proper and special existence. Had it for its *oneness*—pardon the expression !—any proper, peculiar, individual existence apart, had it personality and life, then were intelligence its better part also.'

Lessing. 'Very good! But how do you conceive your personal extra-mundane Deity? Is it after the fashion of Leibnitz? I rather fear that he, too, was a Spinozist at heart.'

Jacobi. 'Do you speak in earnest?'

Lessing. 'Do you in earnest doubt it? Leibnitz's conception of truth was of the sort that would not bear being confined within too narrow bounds. Many of his statements flowed from this mode of thought; and it is often extremely difficult, even with every possible attention, to discover his real opinion. It is for this reason that I think so much of him—I mean from his grand manner of thinking, and not because of this or that opinion he may seem to entertain, or may even entertain in fact.'

Jacobi. 'You are right. Leibnitz was ready "to strike fire from every pebble." But it was some particular Spinozistic view which you said Leibnitz was disposed at heart to entertain.'

Lessing. 'Do you remember a passage in his writings where he says of God that He is in a state of ceaseless expansion and contraction? This must have meant creation and the commencement of the world.'

Jacobi. 'I remember his *Fulgurations*; but the passage to which you refer is unknown to me.'

Lessing. 'I shall look it out, and you will then tell me what a man like Leibnitz thought, could or must have thought, when he set it down.'

Jacobi. 'Let me see the passage by all means. But I must tell you beforehand that I bring to mind so many other passages in his writings of a different character that I cannot conceive it possible Leibnitz should have believed in an Intramundane or Immanent, and not in a Supramundane, Cause of the world.'

Lessing. 'Here I must give way to you. You will have the preponderance of testimony too; and I own that I may perhaps have said too much. Still the passage I

have quoted, and many more besides, present themselves to me as extraordinary. But not to forget! On what ideas do you ground your opposition to Spinoza? Do you think that Leibnitz's "Principia" make an end of him?'

Jacobi. 'How could I, with my firm persuasion that the consistent Determinist is not different from the Fatalist? Do *you* find that Leibnitz's "Principia" make an end of him? The Monads with their bonds leave thought and extension, and especially reality, as incomprehensible to me as ever—they help me neither on this side nor that. For the rest, I know of no philosophical system that agrees so essentially with Spinozism as that of Leibnitz; and it is difficult to say which of the authors of these has himself as well as us most constantly at advantage. Has not Mendelssohn shown that the pre-established harmony is extant in Spinoza? And I undertake to set before you the whole of Leibnitz's psychology from the same source. Both entertain the same views of freedom; and if Spinoza illustrates our feeling of freedom by the stone in motion, Leibnitz does the same by the magnet, which has a fancy for turning to the north, and does so independently of any other cause, unconscious as it is of the magnetic force which determines its motions.'

Jacobi proceeds at some length to demonstrate the numerous points of resemblance existing between the philosophy of Leibnitz with that of Spinoza, when Lessing interrupts him somewhat impetuously with—

Lessing. 'I shall leave you no peace till you give this parallelism to the public! The folks still continue to speak of Spinoza as of a dead dog.'

Jacobi. 'They would continue to speak of him in the same way whether I give it or not. To understand Spinoza requires too long and too laborious an effort of mind; and no one has understood Spinoza to whom a single line of the "Ethics" remains obscure; no one understands him who does not himself understand how this great man could

have had such a firm persuasion of his philosophy as he so often and so emphatically declares that he had. At the very end of his days he wrote: *Non præsumo me optimam invenisse philosophiam, sed veram me intelligere scio* (I presume not to say that I have discovered the best philosophy, but I know that I understand the philosophy that is true). Such repose of spirit, such heaven in the understanding, as this clear, pure head achieved for itself, has been enjoyed by few.'

Lessing. 'And you are no Spinozist?'

Jacobi. 'No, on my honour!'

Lessing. 'On my honour, then, you must turn your back on all philosophy.'

Jacobi. 'Why so?'

Lessing. 'Because you are a thorough sceptic.'

Jacobi. 'On the contrary, I withdraw from a philosophy that makes thorough scepticism imperative.'

Lessing 'And go—whither?'

Jacobi. 'Towards the light of which Spinoza says that it lightens itself and the darkness too. I love Spinoza; for he, more than any other philosopher, has led me to the assured conviction that there are certain matters that cannot be unravelled and explained, in presence of which we are not to shut our eyes indeed, but which we must take even as we find them. I have no more intimate persuasion of anything than I have of final causes; no more lively conviction than that I do what I think, that I think what I do. With this, it is true, I am forced to presume a source of thought and of action which I can in no wise explain.'

Lessing. 'You express yourself almost as heartily as does the dictum of the Diet of Augsburg; for my part, however, I continue true Lutheran, and yet maintain "the more bestial than human error and blasphemy, that there is no free will," a conclusion with which the clear, pure head of your Spinoza had also to content itself.'

Jacobi. 'Ay, but Spinoza had to make not a few con-

tortions in order to hide his fatalism in its bearing on human conduct. In the fourth and fifth parts of the "Ethics" I might almost say he condescends to sophistry in this view. And this was what I maintained when I said, that the very greatest minds, when they will perforce explain and make everything tally with everything else, must needs come to absurd conclusions.'

Lessing. 'And he who seeks not to explain?'

Jacobi. 'He who seeks not to explain the incomprehensible, but only to know the boundaries where it begins, and acknowledges the existence of these, secures, I believe, the largest field for the discovery of genuine human truth.'

Lessing. 'Words, dear Jacobi, mere words! The boundaries you would set cannot be ascertained, and you, *per contra*, open up the freest field to dreaming, blindness, and unreason.'

Jacobi. 'I believe, however, that the boundaries I speak of may be known. I would set myself none, but only find out those that are already fixed, and not disturb them. And as to dreaming, blindness, and unreason——'

Lessing. 'Oh, they are everywhere at home where indistinct ideas rule.'

Jacobi. 'Still more where *false* ideas rule. The blindest and least rational belief, if it be not also the most foolish conceivable, has there its place of honour. For he who has once become enamoured of certain explanations, takes each conclusion blindly that follows as sequence from one he cannot interpret with his best endeavours. And then, when we insist on dwelling on that only which can be explained and co-ordinated in the realm of things, there arises a certain phantom light in the soul that dazzles more than it enlightens. We then sacrifice what Spinoza profoundly and exaltedly at once designates knowledge of the first or highest kind; we shut the eyes of the soul, wherewith it sees God and itself, that we may the more undisturbedly look with the eyes of the body only.'

Lessing. 'Good—very good! I too can put all that to use. But I cannot make out of it the thing you do. Your *salto mortale* in particular, however, delights me; and I conceive how a man of mind may get from one position to another in such heels-over-head fashion. Take me with you, pray, when you next perform the feat.'

Jacobi. 'Would you but step with me on the spring-board that sends me forward, the thing were done.'

Lessing. 'Ay, but a leap besides were wanted, and this I can no longer trust my old legs and heavy head with taking deftly.'

'The Education of the Human Race' was almost the latest work that proceeded from Lessing's pen. Next to 'Nathan the Wise,' if not before it, it is the best known in this country. It has been translated by the late Rev. F. W. Robertson, and it has exercised an acknowledged influence over the Broad Church party. But what is original in one generation becomes, by its very popularity, a common-place in the next. I have read it very carefully and find in it little that is not familiar to every thoughtful reader of the present day, acquainted though he be with but a modicum of philosophical thought. There is occasionally something distinctively pantheistic in it: at the same time it must be admitted that the avowed aim of the book is to inculcate a belief that 'every little sect or religion has, doubtless, had some germ of the truth within it, which has rendered it subservient to the great purpose of fertilising the world; but so long as the professors of either of them think they are favoured children of the Divine Father, whom He regards with a complacency with which he does not view the rest of humanity, so long is the fulness of God's idea not attained by them.' So that Toleration more than Pantheism may be called the aim of the book.

'The Education of the Human Race' is a little work written in exactly a hundred brief paragraphs; consisting of terse suggestive sentences, demonstrating that the reli-

gions of the various ages of man consist of a slow gradual progress from low ideas to higher, rather than in a final Revelation announced for all time.

'That which Education is to the Individual, Revelation is to the Race.'

'Education is Revelation coming to the Individual Man; and Revelation is Education which has come, and is yet coming, to the Human Race.'

'It was impossible for Savage Man to attain to the sublime conception of an Infinite One demonstrating Himself in everything. Polytheism and Idolatry are the natural beliefs of uncultured humanity, and therefore must not be condemned. In progress of time, men became capable of conceiving the idea of monotheism; yet their One God was but an anthropomorphic creation of their own, inasmuch as they could not conceive the idea of Him caring for any race but their own, and believed the rest of the world must be ungoverned by Him; it was only their own little spot that could be worthy of His consideration.'

'But how far was this conception of the One below the true transcendental conception of the One which reason learnt to derive, so late with certainty, from the conception of the Infinite One?'

'Although the best of the people were already more or less approaching the true conception of the One only, the people as a whole could not for a long time elevate themselves to it. And this was the sole true reason why they so often abandoned their One God, and expected to find the One, *i.e.*, as they meant, the Mightiest, in some God or other, belonging to another people.'

'As yet the Jewish people had reverenced in their Jehovah rather the Mightiest than the Wisest of all Gods; as yet they had rather feared Him as a jealous God than loved Him: a proof this, too, that the conceptions which they had of their Eternal One God were not exactly the right conceptions which we should have of God. However,

now the time was come that these conceptions of theirs were to be expanded, ennobled, rectified, to accomplish which God availed Himself of a quite natural means, a better and more correct measure; by which it got the opportunity of appreciating Him.' Lessing then traced the benefits that accrued to the Jewish race from their enforced association with the Persian, and subsequently with the Greek and Alexandrian schools. Until at last a better Instructor had arrived. Christ came! Showing thereby that the Childhood of the Human Race had grown into its Youth.

'That is, this portion of the human race that was come so far in the exercise of its reason, as to need, and to be able to make use of, nobler and worthier motives of moral action than temporal rewards and punishments, which had hitherto been its guides. The child had become a youth. Sweetmeats and toys have given place to the budding desire to be as free, as honoured, and as happy as its elder brother.'

And as the New Testament supersedes the Old, so in like manner shall we find eventually that the New contains many things that are only relatively true, prefiguring as it were, instead of accurately describing, actual truths. 'For instance, the doctrine of the Trinity. How if this doctrine should at last, after endless errors, right and left, only bring men on the road to recognise that God cannot possibly be One in the sense in which finite things are one, that even His unity must be a transcendental unity which does not exclude a sort of plurality?'

Lessing concludes the 'Education of the Human Race' with somewhat curious speculations upon the theory of Pre-existence. 'Why should not every individual man have existed more than once upon this world? Is this hypothesis so laughable merely because it is the oldest?'

'Why should I not come back as often as I am capable of acquiring fresh knowledge, fresh expertness? Do I

bring away so much from once that there is nothing to repay the trouble of coming back?

'Is this a reason against it? Or, because I forget that I have been here already? Happy is it for me that I do forget. The recollection of my former condition would permit me to make only a bad use of the present. And that which even I must forget *now*, is that necessarily forgotten for ever?

'Or is it a reason against the hypothesis that so much time would have been lost to me? Lost? And how much then should I miss? Is not a whole Eternity mine?'

Lessing did not live to see the effects of this little work.

During the period of its composition he was in gradually failing health,—failing health that arose more from mental than from physical causes. The story of his private life is a very sad one. Partly through his gambling propensities, but chiefly through his intense generosity, he was always striving to battle with the advances of intense poverty. As soon as he made a little money, his brothers and sisters would throw themselves upon his protection; and so it became impossible for him to save. Singularly fitted for the pleasures of domestic life, prudence warned him of the danger of entering into matrimony; and luckily for him up to the time of middle age, love seems to have played but a very subordinate part in his career.

But in 1770, when he was already past forty years of age, he was destined to yield to an overmastering passion which was to last throughout his life. It was no sudden evanescent sentiment, such as men experience in their early youth. The object of Lessing's attachment was a widow, the mother of several children, some of whom were approaching to maturity. She could have been, therefore, no longer in her first youth; but her mind was of almost masculine capacity, and she managed to elicit from Lessing that profound feeling of veneration and attachment an intellectual man sometimes bestows upon an intellectual

woman even though her physical charms be already on the wane. But Lessing was utterly without the means to provide for a wife and possible children, and Frau König was left so badly off that it was with great difficulty she could contrive to pay for her own children's education and clothing. It was felt therefore by both parties that present marriage was out of the question, and the middle-aged lovers decided to wait till better times arrived.

Very unlike the rhapsodies of younger couples are the letters that pass between Lessing and his beloved. Neither will allow the other to complain of melancholy or distress; but each determines to brace the other, if need be, with an almost stern rebuff, if discontent or gloomy anticipations are ever yielded to. 'I must tell you,' writes Lessing one day to Eva König, who had been complaining of depression, 'I must tell you that I consider melancholy a most wilful disease, which is not shaken off because one does not want to shake it off.'

And another time when she has been informed that he too suffers from depression, and begs him for her sake to take courage, he writes back:—

'And in this manner I will also write to you; a healthy man to a healthy woman, a happy man to a happy woman. For truly, if one is the former, one must needs be the latter also, and can be, if one only will. Therefore do not be uneasy for me; I have made it a rule always to be happy, however little occasion I may see for it; and as I live here there are more people surprised that I do not perish from *ennui* and disgust than would be surprised if I really did perish. It certainly requires art to persuade oneself that one is happy, but then in what else does happiness consist than in such self-persuasion?'

As time passes, however, and there seems no nearer prospect of any union, even brave endeavour is unable to screen from Lessing the hopelessness of the engagement. He feels his lot almost more keenly than does his affianced,

for she at least has the society of her children, whereas he, at times, seems almost overpowered by his intense feeling of loneliness and isolation. Courted by many though he is, he would willingly resign all festivities for one hour with her; and at the beginning of 1773 he writes:—

'During the last eight days I have been obliged to go into society. I had to go to court for the new year, and did with the rest what is certainly no use when one does it, but may do harm when one neglects it, namely, I have scraped and bowed and used my mouthpiece; the only wish that I really felt all the while was—alas! you know only too well what, my love. Can it be that there is no happy year in store for me?'

There were three more years of dreary expectation, and then fortune seemed to rain her favours upon him with an almost lavish superfluity. Early in July, 1776, the reigning Duke was seized with apoplexy, and the Hereditary Prince, who had been on terms of admiring intimacy with Lessing, returned to Brunswick. He sent for him to announce verbally that he intended to place from eight hundred to one thousand thalers immediately at his disposal, with a house near the library to be vacant the following Michaelmas. The Prince further hinted that the serious illness of the reigning Duke might lead to other and yet more advantageous changes for Lessing. And in the meantime, the Prince added, the title of Hofrath was to be bestowed upon him.

Good fortune, like ill, seldom comes alone. In the midst of his preparations for removing into the house placed at his disposal by the Prince of Brunswick, Lessing received an offer from the Palatine Charles Theodore of a yearly pension of a hundred louis d'or, if he would take part in labours for the Academy of Sciences recently founded, and of which the Palatine sent him a diploma of membership. The obligations the post imposed would, Lessing was assured, be trifling; and with the permis-

sion of the Duke and Prince, he gladly closed with the offer.

There was thus no need for further delay of his much-hoped-for marriage; and on October 8 at Hamburg their union was quietly solemnised. Accustomed to so much unhappiness throughout his life, Lessing scarcely dare trust in the prospect of the perfect bliss that seemed opening upon him. And it is more with caution than with rapture that he writes to his brother: 'I have much to tell you about my marriage, and ought to tell it. You know my wife, although you may hardly remember her, as you only saw her once. If I assure you that I have ever held her to be the only woman with whom I should venture to live, you will then believe that she possesses all I seek in a wife. If I am therefore not happy with her, I should certainly have been more unhappy with every other. In brief, come to us next summer and see.'

For once, his anticipations of happiness were not to be disappointed. His married life was without alloy in its perfect bliss. Their income was ample for their frugal habits, and their house was the daily resort of the most cultivated minds. Honoured amongst the most honoured of their friends was Moses Mendelssohn, who gladly perceived in Eva König a woman in all ways worthy to be his friend's wife. At first he had feared that Lessing's marriage might prove an interruption to their intercourse; for Jews, at that time, were almost invariably regarded as outcasts; and women, as he knew, could seldom rise above the prejudices of their generation. Moreover, his social position was not of such a standing as to entitle him (in the eyes of the worldly at least) to aspire to intimacy with one who was now an acknowledged favourite with the court. But Eva König was utterly without the ordinary littlenesses of her sex. Nobility of heart and greatness of intellect were more to her than difference of creed or of social position. And instead of repelling his advances as he had feared, she

eagerly welcomed him with the tender gratitude she felt was due to one to whose ennobling influence she knew all her husband's higher qualities were to be attributed.

So past the first year of their union! On Christmas Eve, fourteen months after their wedding-day, Eva Lessing gave birth to a son who only lived a few hours. A fortnight after the mother followed her child to its last resting place. The husband received the intelligence with the quiet patience that is so much more touching than any loud demonstrations of grief. 'My wife is dead!' he writes, 'and I have now gone through this experience also. I am glad that many more such experiences cannot be in store for me, and feel quite relieved.'

He did not indulge in the luxury of grief common to weaker minds: on the contrary, he roused himself to do his part in the work of life; but from the day of his wife's death his health gradually failed. Try as he may, he cannot rouse himself from the intense loneliness that is eating into his soul.

'I am quite left to myself here,' he writes to a friend. 'I have no one in whom I can entirely confide. I am daily troubled by a hundred vexations. I have to pay dearly for a single year spent with a sensible woman. How often do I feel inclined to regret that I wanted to be as happy as others. How often I wish that I could return at once to my old isolated condition, and be nothing, wish nothing, do nothing, but what each moment brings with it!'

His greatest pleasure was in devoting himself to the interests of his beloved wife's children; and when Amalie König, who had ever been a favourite with him, was seized with a serious illness, he entreated her to live with him, so that he might watch over her health with a father's care. Amalie obeyed the request with ready affection, and perceiving his intense loneliness, that he vainly sought to conceal, endeavoured, with a daughter's affection, to supply the place left vacant by her mother.

But even this slight solace he was not allowed to enjoy unmolested. Scandal, that form of gossip which is the offspring of prurience mated to cruelty, was busy with his name because he allowed his stepdaughter to live with him now that her mother was no longer alive to act as a protector. He could have scorned such reports about himself, but a maiden's reputation is a tender thing; and in touching apprehension, he writes to consult with a friend as to the proper course be ought to pursue. 'The girl is as dear to me as my own daughter,' he wrote; 'indeed I had always regarded her as such; still rather than hurt her in the eyes of the world, I will let her go. She is the one, the only comfort of my life; without her I shall fall back into the terrible loneliness of my former condition.'

Happily for Lessing this last sorrow was spared him. The friend whom he consulted did not seem to think Amalie would receive any real harm in the world's eyes by remaining with him. Moreover, Amalie herself, strong in her own innocence, resolutely refused to leave him. She was slowly and painfully perceiving, what was as yet undiscerned by strangers, that Lessing's health was gradually failing; and she determined to remain with him to the last, and nurse with a daughter's care one who had always acted as a tender father to her.

He lingered on some months. None could say that he was suffering from any real or definite illness. All that he himself complained of was an intense weariness, and constant attacks of such heavy sleep that all his resolution could not enable him to conquer it. At last his eyesight nearly failed; then came on numbness of limbs, difficulty of speech, and inability to express himself rightly. And on February 16, 1781, he passed away quietly, and apparently without suffering. 'Like a sage,' as a friend who was present at his death, described it, 'calm, resolute, conscious to the last moment.'

CHAPTER IX.

DIGRESSION ON THE SCEPTICISM OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

BEFORE proceeding to the consideration of the German Transcendentalists, let us pause a little and devote a few pages to reviewing the kind of philosophy that was most in vogue during the greater portion of the eighteenth century.

The great names of Voltaire, Hume, and Kant are fit representatives of the three most cultivated as well as most philosophic nations of the modern world; and are sufficient to indicate to the reader that France, Britain, and Germany vied with each other at this period in their inculcation of what has been called the 'eighteenth century scepticism.' Bacon and Locke had superseded Descartes and Spinoza; criticism displaced mysticism and speculation.

Voltaire, the eldest of the three philosophers, openly acknowledged his indebtedness to Locke; although it must be owned he somewhat travestied the doctrines of that calm sober philosopher with the witty though somewhat superficial brilliancy so eminently characteristic of his nation. Locke, he believed, was the first philosopher worthy of being so called, in that he was the only one who had been in possession of sufficient penetration to refrain from mooting questions which were incapable of any solution. 'Before him the great philosophers had decided positively what the soul of man is; but as they knew nothing whatever about it, they all, as might be expected, held different opinions.' And in that oft-quoted passage,

which, notwithstanding its familiarity, we here reproduce, he dismisses with easy vivacity the whole question of philosophy and philosophers until the appearance of the great English sage John Locke:—

'In Greece, the cradle of arts and of errors, where the greatness and the folly of the human mind were pushed to their furthest possible extremes, there were as many discussions about the soul as among us. The divine Anaxagoras, to whom an altar was dedicated because he taught men that the sun was larger than the Peloponnesus, that snow was black, and that the heavens were stone, affirmed that the mind was ethereal, and nevertheless immortal.

'Diogenes (not the same with the man who turned cynic after he had failed as coiner) was confident that the mind was a part of the substance of God; and this idea was at all events brilliant. Epicurus made it consist of parts like the body. Aristotle, who has been explained in a thousand ways, because he was unintelligible, believed, if we may trust some of his disciples, that the understanding of all men was one and the same substance. The divine Plato, master of the divine Aristotle, and the divine Socrates, master of the divine Plato, called the soul corporeal and eternal. No doubt the demon of Socrates had informed him what it was. There are people, I own, who are bold enough to say that a man who boasted of having a familiar genius was indisputably somewhat of a fool, or somewhat of a rogue; but these people are hard to please. As to the fathers of the Church, many in the first ages have believed the human soul, the angels, and God corporeal. The world is always advancing in refinement. St. Bernard, according to the confession of Père Mabillon, taught in respect of the soul, that after death it did not see God in heaven, but only the humanity of Jesus Christ. For this once his word was not taken to be law. The second crusade had a little discredited his oracles. A thousand schoolmen came afterwards: the impregnable doctor, the

subtle doctor, the angelical doctor, the seraphic doctor, the cherubic doctor, who were all quite certain that they understood the soul thoroughly, but contrived to speak as if they desired that no one else should understand anything of it. Our Descartes, born to discover the errors of the ancients, and to substitute for them errors of his own—seduced by that desire of system which blinds the greatest men—fancied that he had proved that the soul was the same thing as the thought, just as matter, according to him, is the same thing as extension. He was thoroughly convinced that the soul came into the body possessed of all metaphysical notions—knowing God, Space, the Infinite—having all abstract ideas, full of beautiful knowledges, which, unfortunately, were forgotten in the process of coming out of the womb. Father Malebranche, in his sublime illusions, not only does not admit innate ideas, but had no doubt that we see all in God, and that God, so to speak, is our soul. All these reasoners have written the Romance of the soul; a sage is now at last to produce in modest style, its History. Locke has discovered the human reason to man, just as an excellent anatomist explains the springs of the body. He is always glad to profit by the torch of physical science; he has the courage to speak sometimes affirmatively; he has the courage also to doubt. Instead of putting at once into definitions that which we know not, he examines step by step what we wish to know. He takes an infant at the moment of its birth; he follows step by step the progress of its learning; he perceives what it has in common with the lower animals, and what it has that is above them; he consults on all occasions his own testimony, the consciousness of his thought.'

Then having quoted from the second 'Book of the Essay concerning Human Understanding,' in which Locke declares he is not one of those who believe the soul is always thinking, any more than he can decide the exact moment a child first becomes conscious of sensation, Vol-

taire proceeds: 'For myself, I claim the honour of being in this matter as childish as Locke. No one shall make me believe that I am always thinking; and I do not feel myself more disposed than he was to imagine that certain weeks after my conception I was a very learned soul, knowing then a thousand things that I forgot when I was born, and having in the uterus a quantity of knowledge which departed from me as soon as I wanted it, and which I have never been able to recover since. Locke, then, after having overthrown innate ideas—after having disclaimed the vanity of believing that he was always thinking—having thoroughly established a doctrine that our ideas come through our senses—having examined our simple ideas and our complex ideas—having followed the mind of man in all its operations—having shown us how imperfect are the tongues which men speak, and how they are deceived by the terms they are using—Locke, I say, comes to consider the extent, or rather the nothingness of human knowledge. It is in this chapter that he is so bold as modestly to put forward these words: *We shall never, perhaps, be capable of knowing if a being purely material thinks or not.* This wise statement appears to more than one theologian a scandalous declaration, that the soul is material and mortal. Certain Englishmen, devout in their fashion, sounded the alarm. Such people are in a society what the timid are in an army—they feel and they create a panic. The cry was raised that Locke wanted to overthrow religion. Religion had nothing to do with the matter. It was a purely philosophical question, wholly independent of revelation. The question might be discussed without any bitterness, whether there is any contradiction in saying—Matter can think; God can communicate thought to matter. But the theologians begin too often with assuming that God is outraged by any who are not of their opinion.'

From the above passage it will be seen that, in spite of

the somewhat distasteful flippancy of his style, Voltaire was not the dogmatic denier he is sometimes represented to be. His intellect was too acute to allow him to deny, any more than to affirm, that of which he was in perfect ignorance. Moreover, he did not wish, as has sometimes been imagined, to wholly break through the restraints of religion for the populace. He had an easy good-humoured contempt for men and women in general; he did not write for the many, only for the few; and it was perhaps his misfortune that the brilliancy of his style and vivacity of his mode of expression made him read and admired by many who would have been unable or disinclined to wade through the drier works of the English and German philosophers. It was this contempt for the intelligence of the mass that led him to believe that philosophers, however extravagant they may be in their opinions, will never be the same means of disseminating mischief as are the theologians; because the latter class of men are read as a duty and faithfully followed by the vast majority of unthinking men, whereas the former are only read and comprehended by the philosophical few who are for the most part entirely raised above the ordinary passions of mankind.

'Moreover,' he says, 'we ought never to fear that any philosophical sentiment can injure the religion of a country. Our mysteries may very well be contrary to our expectations. They are not the less received on that account by our Christian philosophers, who know that the objects of reason and of faith are of a different nature. The philosophers will never form a religious sect.' Why? Because they do not write for the people, and because they are without enthusiasm. Divide the human race into twenty parts; nineteen consist of those who work with their hands, and who will never know whether there has been a Mr. Locke in the world. In the twentieth part which remains, how many are there who read? And among those who read, there are twenty who read romances for one

who studies philosophy. The number of those who think is excessively small, and those do not care to trouble the world. It is neither Montaigne nor Locke, nor Bayle, nor Spinoza, nor Hobbes, nor Lord Shaftesbury, nor Mr. Collins, nor Mr. Toland, nor Fludd, nor Baker, who have carried the torch of discord into their countries. Those who have done so have been, for the most part, theologians, who, having first aspired to be chiefs of sects, have afterwards aspired to be chiefs of parties. What do I say? All the books of the modern philosophers taken together will never make as much noise in the world as was made in former days by the dispute of the Cordeliers about the shape of their sleeves and their hoods.'

Not unlike Voltaire in his perfect scepticism (we must again repeat, not denial) was the acute thinker David Hume.

'I observe first the universe of objects or of body; the sun, moon, and stars; the earth, seas, plants, animals, men, ships, houses, and other productions either of art or of nature. Here Spinoza appears and tells me that these are only modifications, and that the subject in which they inhere is simple, uncompounded, and indivisible. After this I consider the other system of beings, viz. the universe of thought, or my impressions and ideas. Then I observe another sun, moon and stars: an earth and seas, covered and inhabited by plants and animals, towns, houses, mountains, rivers; and, in short, everything I can discover or conceive in the first system. Upon my enquiring concerning these, theologians present themselves and tell me that these also are modifications, and modifications of one simple, uncompounded and indivisible substance. Immediately upon which I am deafened with the noise of a hundred voices that treat the first hypothesis with detestation and scorn, and the second with applause and veneration. I turn my attention to these hypotheses to see what may be the reason of so great a partiality, and find that

they have the same fault of being unintelligible, and that as far as we can understand them they are so much alike that 'tis impossible to discover any absurdity in one which is not common to both of them.' And, again, concerning the questions of metaphysics in general, i.e. God, the soul, the cause or design of the world, &c., he declares 'the whole is a riddle, an enigma, an inexplicable mystery;' although in another place it must be acknowledged that he has come to the conclusion that 'the whole frame of nature bespeaks an Intelligent Author.' But in all other questions Hume is to the full quite as great a sceptic as Voltaire.

And, notwithstanding the striking divergence in his style and method, no less a sceptic must be pronounced to be the great metaphysician of Germany, Emanuel Kant. No one can accuse this philosopher of volatility or indifference. Profound, earnest, weighty, though, it must be owned, with a proneness to become at times terribly obscure, he comes before us as a man who claims our reverence no less for his wonderful ability than for his intense conscientiousness. Not everyone is it who could so subordinate his ambition to his unswerving regard for truth as to refuse to publish his work till he had completed his fifty-seventh year, rather than be the means of promulgating views that might be in any way crude or ill-considered. By some of his adherents he has been considered the Great Transcendentalist, by others the Critic. To us he appears as the Socrates of the modern world; partly through his love of criticism; partly also that he had not altogether imperfectly succeeded in demolishing the systems of his predecessors; but chiefly because, perceiving the futility of seeking after final causes, he devoted himself to the inculcation of Morality or the study of Ethics. It was this earnest craving after the higher life that separated him from most of his compeers in this somewhat superficial century. In other ways we must candidly confess

he was as much a sceptic as any of his contemporaries. The dreary outcome of all his patient devotion to his work was that he had sought and had not found. He likened the human understanding to an island enclosed within unchangeable boundaries, surrounded by a wide and stormy ocean, the especial abode of phantoms, where many a bank of mist and ice, soon to melt away, holds out the lying promise of new regions; and while it perpetually deceives the roaming seafarer with the vain hope of discoveries, continually entangles him in adventures from which he can never get loose and which he can never bring to any result.

'After we have satisfied ourselves,' he says, 'of the vanity of all the ambitious attempts of reason to fly beyond the bounds of experience, enough remains of practical value to content us. It is true that no one can boast that he *knows* that God and a future life exist; for, if he possesses such knowledge, he is just the man for whom I have long been seeking. All knowledge (touching an object of mere reason) can be communicated, and therefore I might hope to see my own knowledge increased to this prodigious extent by his instruction. No; our conviction in these matters is not *logical* but *moral* certainty; and, inasmuch as it rests upon subjective grounds (of moral disposition), I must not even say *it is* morally certain that there is a God, and so on; but, *I am* morally certain, and so on. That is to say, the belief in a God and in another world is so interwoven with my moral nature, that the former can no more vanish than the latter can ever be torn from me.

'The only point to be remarked here is that this act of faith of the intellect (*Vernunftglaube*) assumes the existence of moral dispositions. If we leave them aside, and suppose a mind quite indifferent to moral laws, the enquiry started by reason becomes merely a subject for speculation, and may then indeed be supported by strong arguments from analogy, but not by such as are competent to overcome persistent scepticism.

'There is no one, however, who can fail to be interested in these questions. For although he may be excluded from the moral influences by the want of a good disposition, yet, even in this case, enough remains to lead him to fear a divine existence and a future state. To this end no more is necessary than that he can at least have no certainty that there is no such being, and no future life; for to make this conclusion demonstratively certain, he must be able to prove the impossibility of both; and this assuredly no rational man can undertake to do. This negative belief, indeed, cannot produce either morality or good dispositions, but can operate in analogous fashion by powerfully repressing the outbreak of evil tendencies.

'But it will be said, Is this all that Pure Reason can do when it gazes out beyond the bounds of experience? Nothing more than two articles of faith? Common sense could achieve as much without calling the philosophers to its counsels!

'I will not here speak of the service which Philosophy has rendered to human reason by the laborious efforts of its criticism, granting that the outcome proves to be merely negative; about that matter something is to be said in the following section. But do you then ask, that the knowledge which interests all men shall transcend the common understanding and be discovered for you only by philosophers? The very thing which you make a reproach is the best confirmation of the justice of the previous conclusions, since it shows that which could not at first have been anticipated; namely, that in those matters which concern all men alike, nature is not guilty of distributing her gifts with partiality; and that the highest philosophy, in dealing with the most important concerns of humanity, is able to take us no further than the guidance which she affords to the commonest understanding.'

It is well to notice here how in this doctrine of Faith, foreshadowed by Kant, and subsequently greatly extended

by Fichte, the philosophy of the modern world was but repeating that of the ancient. In the Greek and Alexandrian schools scepticism, hopeless and entire, had been the result of all investigation into mental, moral, or physical phenomena; and this scepticism by a natural reaction was succeeded, as we have seen in the last volume, by the Neo-Platonic faith. The scepticism of the eighteenth century was to undergo a like reaction. Kant the Transcendentalist was as a philosopher quite as great a sceptic as Voltaire or Hume. God, Immortality, Design—not one of the great questions that press upon the thoughtful mind showed itself capable of any conclusive answer. 'Our internal intuition shows no permanent existence, for the Ego is only the consciousness of my thinking.' 'There is no means whatever by which we can learn anything respecting the constitution of the soul, so far as regards the possibility of its separate existence.'[1] But Kant was thus far marked off from his contemporaries in that he was deeply conscious of the necessity of some moral law or rule of guidance in his practical life. In all other portions of his philosophy he was content to trust to his reason and to remain a perfect sceptic, knowing only that he knew nothing. He could not be content with mere negation in ethics. If he could not discover any design in the arrangement of the world, he would assume design; if he could not perceive any prospect of immortality, he would, nevertheless, assume the certainty of such prospect. By a voluntary subordination of his reason to his faith he would, in this one solitary question of ethics, believe where he could no longer see. But what was a solitary exception in the critical logical philosophy of Kant gradually developed with his successors into a complete rule. Faith with Fichte was no exception, but the principal basis of his philosophy; and with Schelling and Hegel this faith grew into such visionary

[1] 'Kritik von den Paralogismen der reinen Vernunft.'

mysticism as to make their doctrines to the minds of most readers almost incomprehensible.

In addition to this general scepticism regarding immortality and final causes, the eighteenth century dawned upon the philosophical world to find it also absorbed in the two subjects of discussion that had occupied it since the human intellect had attained its earliest maturity—Innate Ideas, and Empiricism. Was our knowledge innate; given to us at, or even before, our birth; or was it simply derived from experience, from what we could learn from our senses? Locke may be called the apostle of Empiricism; Berkeley of Idealism. But as disciples not unfrequently outrun the master, the followers not only of Berkeley but of Locke had carried their apostles' doctrines to a sort of one-sided extreme. They had sought to magnify, instead of reconciling each other's differences; and the consequence was, on both sides, an intense, hopeless scepticism. It is only fair to Locke to avow that though by some he has been considered the author of modern scepticism, he not only was not its originator, but he did not even by acquiescence in any way countenance it. He expressly declares that 'If we will disbelieve everything because we cannot certainly know all things, we shall do almost as wisely as he who would not use his legs, but sit still and perish, because he had no wings to fly.' It need scarcely be said that the deeply religious Berkeley was no conscious sceptic; yet that his writings might be easily twisted into a sort of plea for scepticism may be seen, we think, in the fact that even the acute thinker David Hume could write of him thus: 'Most of the writings of that very ingenious philosopher form the best lessons of scepticism which are to be found either among the ancient or modern philosophers, Bayle not excepted. He professes, however, in his title-page (and undoubtedly with great truth) to have composed his book against the sceptics, as well as against the atheists and free-thinkers. But that all his arguments, though

otherwise intended, are in reality merely sceptical appears from this, that they admit of no answer, and produce no conviction.'

As we remarked in a previous chapter, there appears to us to be no logical stand-point between Pantheism and Pyrrhonism; and from the time of Locke to that of Kant and Hume (inclusive) Pyrrhonism seemed to be more or less in possession of the field.

Kant may be called the great restorer of impartial, in place of one-sided philosophy. He likens the revolution he effected in philosophy to that of Copernicus in astronomy. He perceived, with the largeness of a calm philosophical mind, that the disciples both of Berkeley and of Locke had erred in so completely shutting their eyes to the value of their opponents' views. He at once seized the valuable portion in the philosophy both of Berkeley and of Locke. He could not doubt that many of our sources of knowledge were solely the result of experience; but he equally could not doubt that many of our ideas, perhaps the majority, were innate in us, given to us at our birth, independent of any experience. Thus he appeared as the apostle of reconciliation; the restorer of harmony between the one-sided extremes of realism and idealism.

'That all our knowledge begins with experience,' he says, 'there can be no doubt. For how is it possible that the faculty of cognition should be awakened into exercise otherwise than by means of objects which affect our senses, and partly of themselves produce representations (*Vorstellungen*), partly rouse our powers of understanding into activity, to compare, to connect, or to separate these, and so to convert the raw material of our sensuous impressions into a knowledge of objects which is called experience? In respect of time, therefore, no knowledge of ours is antecedent to experience, but begins with it. But although all our knowledge begins with experience, it by no means follows that all arises out of experience. For, on the con-

trary, it is quite possible that our empirical knowledge (*Erfahrungserkenntniss*) is a compound of that which we receive through impressions, and that which the faculty of cognition supplies from itself (sensuous impressions giving merely the occasion), an addition which we cannot distinguish from the original element given by sense, till long practice has made us attentive to and skilful in separating it. It is therefore a question which requires close investigation, and is not to be answered at first sight, whether there exists a knowledge altogether independent of experience and even of all sensuous impressions.'

We shall not devote any space to the doctrines of Kant. They seem to contain, as far as we understand them, little more than the germ of Pantheism. We rise from their perusal with the conviction that their author was a sceptic almost to the extent of David Hume. Mr. Lewes has well remarked: 'The difference between Hume and Kant, when deeply considered, is this: Hume said that the understanding was treacherous, and, as such, it rendered philosophy impossible. Kant said that the understanding was not treacherous, but limited; it was to be trusted as far as it went, but it *could* not go far enough; it was so circumscribed that ontology was impossible.'

Kant's religious views are expressed in his work entitled 'Religion within the Limits of Pure Reason.' They chiefly consist in reducing all religion to a question of morals. Theology, or an intellectual acceptance of various creeds, is a question of very minor importance. It is a matter of indifference whether three or ten persons are worshipped in the Godhead; inasmuch as from either worship no alteration in our mode of conduct necessarily follows from it. It is of very grave importance whether our lives shall be devoted to good or evil. Religion, therefore, is to Kant the recognition of all our duties as commandments of God. It is necessary, above all, that our consciences should be tender and void of offence. 'Two

things,' he declares, 'fill me with awe: the starry heavens, and the sense of moral responsibility in man.' He distinguishes between natural and revealed religion by deciding that revealed religion is that which demonstrates something to be a commandment of God before it can otherwise be ascertained to be a duty; and that is natural religion which independently of any revelation pronounces such and such acts to be duties before they are known to be commandments of God. In all this, it will be seen, is little or nothing of Pantheism. So that renowned as Emanuel Kant deservedly was, in a treatise of this description he chiefly concerns us as the pioneer of Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. Even in that part of his philosophy in which he believed himself to have effected the greatest revolution, viz. the reconciliation of the one-sided extremes of realism and idealism, was valuable only for a certain time. That knowledge has but one source, the union of object and subject, was a true but somewhat incomplete explanation; and has now been completely superseded by Mr. Herbert Spencer's masterly definition of life 'as a continuous adjustment of internal relations to external relations.' Or, in other words, that between the organism, with its inherited ancestral experiences, and its environment there is an incessant interaction. The organism is played upon by the environment and is modified by it.

So that in a treatise of this description Kant is only interesting to us as the pioneer of German Transcendentalism; and to the earliest of the Transcendentalists, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, we now proceed.

CHAPTER X.

FICHTE.

JOHANN GOTTLIEB FICHTE first saw the light on May 19, 1762. He was born in the beautiful little village of Rammenau, situated in Upper Lusatia. An anecdote—seemingly well authenticated—relates that at the time of his baptism an aged relative, revered by all men for his wisdom and piety, and who had come from a distance to be present at the ceremony, foretold the future eminence of the child —a prediction which was regarded with the more awe, inasmuch as but a few months passed ere death placed his seal upon the lips of him who had uttered it.

The young Johann grew into a dreamy, meditative boy, filled with abstract spiritual thoughts and deep religious feelings, of which he was himself but confusedly conscious, and which in consequence he was totally unable to translate into language. Much sympathy has been often, and not improperly, bestowed upon such children as are afflicted with stern ascetic parents, and have the sunshine of their childhood darkened and the brightness of their youth overshadowed by the gloom and melancholy of their elders. But it is seldom we hear compassion bestowed upon the rarer and much sadder case of sensitive childhood repelled by the sneers or indifference of worldly parents. Yet the child is father to the man; and few of our greatest thinkers, we imagine, can have passed through the period of childhood and youth without some consciousness of thoughts that almost overpowered them, that lay too deep for tears; but which a little sympathetic tact on

the part of their parents would have led to that longed-for power of utterance that alone could yield relief. It was so with Johann Fichte. His father was a tender conscientious parent, and his son never speaks of him without affectionate respect, yet he had not the power, though he was probably not without the will, to break through that painful reserve which was characteristic of his son through the greater portion of his career.

The elder Fichte—a religious, honourable man—was his son's own teacher during the earliest years of his childhood, and consequently the young Johann, already by nature sufficiently religious and fervent, had the devout feelings carefully fostered by the pious care of his father. Grown people, long accustomed to logical inconsistencies, to wide latitude of private interpretation, to great divergence between practice and precept—can scarcely comprehend the simple indiscriminating faith of childhood which makes it a point of conscience to follow commandments to the letter. A notable instance of this is related of the young Fichte:—When he was about seven years of age, his father, as a reward for his industry in his studies, brought him from the neighbouring town the story of 'Siegfried.' No present could have been more welcome to the boy. He was wrapt up in the book, fascinated by it, and devoured it with all the overwhelming interest the first tale generally exerts over a young romantic mind. At last he was even tempted to neglect his studies in order to indulge himself in reading it. This neglect brought on a grave rebuke from his father. The young Fichte, filled with remorse, could only remember in his simple faith the stern injunction: 'If thy hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee.' The story of Siegfried had been fully as dear to him as hand or foot; yet, as it had tempted him to neglect his duty, it would be a breach of his obedience to the commandment of Christ, he believed, should he any longer retain it. He left the house, there-

fore, taking the book with him, intending to throw it into the brook, so that it might never again be a source of temptation to him. At first his heart failed him; then gathering resolution, he threw in his book, bursting into tears as he did so. His father, happening to arrive on the spot just in time to see his son's act, demanded the reason of his present being treated in so ungracious a manner. The child was totally unable to explain his true motive, whether it were that his tears choked him, whether it were that he shrank with sensitive dread from having his exaggerated notions of religion ridiculed, we know not, but to all his father's enquiries he kept a frightened sort of silence. The elder Fichte was naturally incensed at his son's conduct; and believing that the treatment of his present could only arise from vindictive resentment at the rebuke he had thought fit to bestow upon him, visited him with severer punishment than the boy had ever before received.

This incident was by no means an isolated one during Fichte's early life. It is a strange and suggestive fact that the selfsame individual, who in his after life was to be pointed at as an atheist, was during his early school-life taunted with being a pietist and religionist.

The young Fichte soon attracted the notice of the clergyman of the village, who, perceiving that the lad possessed unusual abilities, allowed him frequently to come to his house in order to receive instruction; and resolved, if possible, to obtain for him a better education than his father's circumstances could lead him to expect. An opportunity of carrying out his kind intentions luckily soon presented itself. A Saxon nobleman, the Freiherr von Miltitz, arriving for a brief period on a visit to Rammenau, was desirous of hearing a sermon from the pastor, who had acquired a certain reputation through his powers of preaching. He arrived too late, however, to have his desires on this wise gratified; and when lamenting his disappointment, the opportunity was seized of informing him that there

was a little lad in the village whose extraordinary memory enabled him to repeat faithfully any address which he had once heard. Little Fichte was accordingly sent for, and in a short time appeared in his clean linen jacket, carrying a nosegay his mother had placed in his hand. As the young boy—not yet ten years of age—repeated, apparently word for word, the long discourse he had heard in the morning, it was evident the Freiherr was growing rapidly interested in the little speaker. The kindly pastor, judiciously seizing his opportunity, so worked upon the Freiherr's feelings that he was induced to undertake the charge of the boy's education. The consent of his parents having been with some difficulty obtained, for they were loth to expose their son to the temptations of sudden and unaccustomed luxury, young John Gottlieb Fichte was formally consigned to the care of his new protector, who engaged to treat him as his own child.

His first removal was to Siebeneichen (Sevenoaks), a seat on the Elbe, belonging to the Freiherr. But the stateliness of the castle, the ceremoniousness of its inmates, the gloomy solemnity of the neighbouring forest, all weighed upon his spirits so deeply that he was threatened with some serious illness. The kindly Freiherr, however, instead of being annoyed at the apparent failure of his plans for his *protégé*, enquired so affectionately after the boy's health, gave him in all his joys and sorrows such ready sympathy, that the little Fichte was enabled to make him a recipient of his confidence, and confess to him in his young ingenuousness that the change from his simple village-home to the stately grandeur of the castle had been too sudden, and that the constraint and gloom were preying upon him, both in mind and body. His generous foster-father was able to enter into the feelings of the lad and determined to reconcile him to his new life by degrees. He therefore sent him for his education to the house of a clergyman in a neighbouring village. Here Fichte spent the happiest years of

his life. The clergyman was without family himself, but was passionately fond of children; and Fichte never mentioned his name in after life without some endearing term of grateful and affectionate emotion. But unfortunately for Gottlieb, in those days pastors in remote German villages were not a very highly educated race of men, and by the time the boy had completed his twelfth year, the honest pastor was himself the first to acknowledge that his pupil had learnt all it was in his power to impart. And to the mutual grief of master and scholar, the Freiherr determined to send his *protégé* to the public school of Pforta.

It would have been better for Fichte had he remained with the pastor. Our greatest men have frequently been those who were self-taught; and with the high moral example of his revered master, coupled with his own eager avidity for knowledge, the years would not have been wasted. He would have been far happier; and, to say the least of it, could not have learnt less than he did the first few years of his residence at Pforta. Both mentally and physically, nothing could have been more repugnant to the lad than was his new abode. The school retained many traces of its monkish origin; the teachers and pupils lived in cells, and the boys were allowed to leave the precincts once a week only, and then under rigid surveillance. Distasteful as the school and its narrow rules were to him, the character of its inmates was even more distasteful. Unaccustomed to the society of boys, habituated either to the gentle manners of his pastor or the stately courtesy of his protector, the low vulgarity and underbreeding of his companions repelled him, while he felt a sensation of pained astonishment at the deceit and petty tyranny that were their daily practice. All his religious feelings, nay, even the dictates of common honesty, were ridiculed. If the conduct of his fellows were viewed by him with horror, he, in his turn, was despised by them for his supposed priggishness; and one senior boy in particular conceived such an

aversion for him that he tortured him as only malignant schoolboys know how to torture. Fichte bore his misery till it became almost past endurance; then one day when he had been treated with more than usual cruelty, he felt he could bear his life no longer and determined to escape. He would not go to be a burden on his parents; he could not return to the good old pastor, fearing his whereabouts might become known to the Freiherr, and he be sent back disgraced to the school. Not knowing where to fly for refuge, he at last conceived the boyish notion of seeking some distant island, where, like Robinson Crusoe, he might lead a life of perfect freedom. But with the courtesy he had learnt in earlier days, he imagined it would be ungenerous to steal away in secret. He would not unfairly get his senior into difficulties, but would warn him of his intention, would give him free notice that if he would not amend his conduct he would submit no longer, but would make an effort to escape from his misery. Boys, like everyone else, judge of others by themselves. The delicate sensitiveness of Fichte was not comprehensible to his tyrant; his warning was regarded as merely a puerile threat; and being received with mockery and laughter, Fichte thought he might now leave the school with honour. On his way he remembered the maxim of the good old pastor, that no undertaking should be commenced without a petition for divine aid. He threw himself upon his knees, and while engaged in prayer the thought of his parents' grief forcibly obtruded itself; possibly also his beloved old master's lamentations at his supposed loss, or (if his flight were discovered) the ungrateful aspect his conduct would naturally wear in the eyes of his benefactor, may also have had some weight with him. Doubts, at all events, overwhelmed him. Would it not be better to bear the misery of his present life than be the cause of grief to all who held him dear? That thought decided him. He would return and confess his fault; he would bear with

resignation any punishment that might be inflicted. He did go back; but detailed with so much honesty and simplicity the motives that induced him to take the step of running away, that the rector of the school not only believed him, but determined to take him under his special protection. He removed him from the authority of his tyrant, and gave him another senior, who soon obtained his affection, and who was his bosom friend and companion, not only during his school days, but during the after period of his college life.

In 1780 Fichte, then eighteen years of age, entered the University of Jena. Partly in compliance with the wish of his parents, and partly, also, because it had always on his own part been a desire to become a clergyman, he entered the theological faculty. But the same logical consistency, coupled with intense conscientiousness, that had made it imperative to him as a boy to follow out literally the commandments of Scripture, now made him perceive the utter impossibility of reconciling his rapidly-increasing knowledge with the teaching of the Bible. This consequent relinquishment of theology as a profession was almost as great an act of self-abnegation on his part as had been the destruction of his beloved book in the days of his childhood. By nature he was fitted for the clerical life. His favourite dream for the future had been to become a village pastor in Saxony; and, amid the leisure he should find in that occupation, prosecute without disturbance his own mental culture. In a worldly point of view this renunciation of theology as a profession was fully as great an act of self-denial as in a personal. With his simple tastes the income of a village pastor would have amply satisfied his wants; but now that his conscience would no longer allow him to undertake this occupation, he knew not how or where to acquire a livelihood. His inclinations prompted him to turn to philosophy now that theology could no longer obtain his adherence. But philosophy is powerless

to provide her students with the necessaries of life. The veteran in her service can barely earn a livelihood, the neophyte must starve. So far from providing him with the pecuniary means of livelihood, she tempts him to the expenditure of the little he may happen to possess. Books, lectures, tutors, all require means, and the unhappy Fichte was without means. His benefactor was dead, his parents had by this time a numerous family to be reared and educated. The only possibility of a livelihood that suggested itself to him was that of teaching. But such a mode of income is not only in its very nature precarious and uncertain, but is, in addition, of too small and insignificant a character to allow of provision for the rainy day that must almost of necessity sooner or later arrive. For about four years Fichte managed to subsist upon the narrow earnings of tuition; but in May, 1788, every prospect closed around him. His former pupils had passed from his hands, and there seemed to be little prospect of these being replaced by others.

It was the eve of his birthday, we are told.[1] The world had cast him out; his country had been but a cold stepmother to him. He pondered all his projects, and found each one more hopeless than the other. He thought somewhat mournfully of the morrow, believing another birthday would never dawn upon him. The darkest clouds not unfrequently precede a gleam of sunshine. Filled with bitter thoughts, Fichte returned to his lodgings, and there found a letter awaiting him, which subsequently led to his engagement as a tutor in a private family in Zurich. His funds were so low that he was forced to travel thither on foot; but his heart was light, and youthful aspirations were quick within him.

A boy of ten and a girl of seven years of age were confided to his care. But in the prosecution of his duties he was hampered by the jealous interference of their mother,

[1] See Dr. W. Smith's interesting 'Memoir of Fichte,' p. 10.

who could not understand the peculiar earnestness Fichte threw into whatsoever he undertook. And, indeed, much as we admire Fichte, our sympathies are not altogether in opposition to the mother. Morbidly conscientious people are quite as often a burden to others as to themselves. Fichte, with his intense yearning not only to *teach* his pupils, but to *educate* them—to draw out all the good, to stifle all the bad, was a tutor such as a narrow-minded, unintellectual woman would be unable to comprehend. It is said that Fichte's habit was to write out each evening all the faults of his pupils during the day, and submit the account to the parents in order that they might be informed of their children's improvement or retrogression. Through the intercession of the father, who was of sufficient ability to recognise the value of his children's tutor, Fichte retained his engagement for nearly two years; when, greatly to the relief of the mother, and not altogether to his own distaste, the engagement was terminated, and our future philosopher had again to search for a means of subsistence.

In spite of the annoyances of his professional life, Fichte always seems to have regarded his sojourn at Zurich with feelings of supreme delight. There for the first time he had tasted the sweets of intellectual intercourse. Amongst the friends he possessed were Lavater, Steinbruchel, Hottinger, and, most important friend of all, Hartmann Rahn, whose house was a centre of the most cultivated society at Zurich. Rahn was the brother-in-law of Klopstock; and from this marriage with Klopstock's sister sprang, besides other children, their eldest daughter Johanna Maria, who subsequently became Fichte's wife. Her family occupied a much higher station than did that of the philosopher; and this, coupled with the fact that Fichte was almost penniless at the time of his proposal to her, shows that her love for him must have been entirely disinterested. Fichte's sentiment for her seems to have been one of reverential esteem, almost amounting to wor-

ship and adoration. But they were both sensible enough to be aware that there can be no real happiness in marriage without some slight means of worldly subsistence; and contented themselves therefore with a mutual interchange of affection without indulging in any present expectation of marriage.

Towards the close of March, 1790, Fichte left Zurich on his return to his native land with some letters of recommendation to Weimar and Wirtemberg; but with the exception of these letters, his prospects presented as gloomy an appearance as they had two years previously. The remuneration of his tutorship had been inadequate to yield anything as a provision; and he was again obliged to leave Zurich on foot in the same manner as he had entered it. He hoped to gain a livelihood by literary work; and conceived the plan of a monthly journal, the principal objects of which should be to expose the dangerous tendencies of the prevalent literature of the day, to demonstrate the mutual influence of correct taste and pure morality, and to direct its readers to the best authors, both of past and present time. But such an undertaking was too much opposed to the interest of the publishers to find favour in their eyes. 'I have,' he says, 'spoken to well-disposed people on this matter, to Weisse and Palmer; they all admit that it is a good and useful idea, and indeed a want of the age, but they all tell me that I shall find no publisher. I have therefore, out of sorrow, communicated my plan to no bookseller; and I must now write—not pernicious writings, that I will never do—but something that is neither good nor bad, in order to earn a little money. I am now engaged on a tragedy, a business which of all possible occupations least belongs to me, and of which I shall certainly make nothing; and upon novels, small romantic stories, a kind of reading good for nothing but to kill time; this, however, is what the booksellers will take and pay for.'

His tragedy and his novel brought him but small

remuneration, and indeed do not seem to have been of sufficient worth to attract attention. It is difficult to write when the mind is distracted with anxiety, and the stomach craving for absolute food. 'As for authorship,' he writes in another place, 'I have been able to do little or nothing, for I am so distracted and tossed about by many schemes and undertakings that I have had few quiet days. . . . In short, Providence either has something else in store for me, and hence will give me nothing to do here, as indeed has been the case, or intends by these troubles to exercise and invigorate me still further. I have lost almost everything, except my courage. . . . If ever I become an author it shall be on my own account. Authorship as a trade is not for me. It is incredible how much labour it costs me to accomplish something with which after all I am but half satisfied. The more I write the more difficult does it become. I see that I want the living fire.'

The Critical or Kantian Philosophy was at this time the great topic of discussion in the higher circles of Germany. Fichte's attention was turned to it quite accidentally. Some increased success in teaching during the winter of 1790, rendered his outward circumstances for the time a trifle less harassing, and left his mind more at liberty to engage in serious study. He plunged into this new philosophy with a sort of intense enthusiasm. 'The last four or five months which I have passed in Leipzig,' he writes to a friend, 'have been the happiest period of my life; and what is most satisfactory about it is that I have to thank no man for the smallest ingredient in its pleasures. When I came to Leipzig my brain swarmed with great plans. All were wrecked; and of so many soap-bubbles there now remains not even the light froth which composed them. This disturbed my peace of mind a little; but since I could not alter my outward circumstances, I resolved upon internal change. I threw myself into the Kantian Philosophy, where I found the remedy for all my evils, and

joy enough to boot. The influence of this philosophy, and particularly the moral part of it, upon the whole spiritual life, and the revolution which it has caused in my own mode of thought, is indescribable. I have become firmly convinced that there is no land of enjoyment here below, but a land of labour and toil, and that every joy of life should be only a refreshment and an incentive to greater exertion; that the ordering of fortune is not demanded of us, but only the cultivation of ourselves. Hence I do not trouble myself about outward things—endeavour not to *seem*, but to *be*; and it is to these convictions that I am indebted for the deep tranquillity of soul which I enjoy. My external circumstances suit well with these dispositions. I am master of no one, and no one's servant. I have no further prospects.'

To his college friend Weisshuhn he writes:—'I have lived in a new world since I have read the "Critique of Practical Reason." Principles which I believed were irrefragable are refuted; things which I thought never could be proved—as, for example, the idea of absolute freedom of duty—are proved; and I am so much the happier. It is indescribable what respect for humanity, what power, this system gives us.'

To his betrothed he writes:—

'My scheming spirit has now found rest, and I thank Providence that shortly before all my hopes were frustrated I was placed in a position which enabled me to bear the disappointment with cheerfulness. A circumstance, which seemed the result of mere chance, led me to give myself up entirely to the study of the Kantian Philosophy—a philosophy that retains the imagination which was always too powerful with me, gives reason the sway, and raises the soul to an indescribable elevation above all earthly concerns. I have accepted a nobler morality, and instead of occupying myself with outward things, I employ myself more with my own being. This has given me a peace such

as I have never before experienced; amid uncertain worldly prospects I have passed my happiest days. I shall devote some years of my life to this philosophy; and all that I write, at least for several years to come, shall be upon it.'

Inspired with this enthusiastic admiration for the Critical Philosophy, he resolved to become the exponent of its principles, and to rescue it from the obscurity which an uncouth terminology had thrown around it. Fichte accordingly commenced an expository abridgment of Kant's 'Critique of the Faculty of Judgment.' He did not finish this work, however, and it was never published. Before committing himself to the publication of any important work, he decided upon visiting Königsberg, in order that he might have an opportunity of cultivating a personal acquaintance with his great master in philosophy. Immediately on his arrival he visited Kant; but that philosopher greatly disliked visits from strangers, and Fichte's impetuous enthusiasm was somewhat chilled by a cold, formal reception, so that he returned deeply disappointed. At last he determined to write a 'Kritik aller Offenbarung,' ('Critique of all Revelation') which should serve as a better introduction. He began his labours on July 13, and worked with such unremitting assiduity that by August 18 he was enabled to send his work completely finished for the inspection of Kant. In about five days he went to the philosopher to learn his opinion, and, to his intense delight, was kindly received by Kant, who pronounced a very favourable judgment upon the book.

But, unfortunately for Fichte, just at this period pecuniary difficulties again pressed upon him. Counting over his little store of money, he found he had only sufficient to enable him to provide for the necessities of another fortnight. In vain did he seek employment. He had no friends in Königsberg, and his means were totally inadequate for the expenses of his journey homewards. At last he determined, though with great reluctance, to reveal to

Kant himself the situation in which he was placed, and to petition him for assistance to enable him to return to his native land.

The letter he addressed to Kant is very touching. Proud and morbidly sensitive, it was only the most extreme necessity that drove him to the act of begging. He commences his appeal by explaining that it was his deep admiration of the philosopher that alone had brought him to Königsberg; but that even this admiration would never have betrayed him into the dishonesty of incurring debt, could he have foreseen the difficulty he should find in obtaining any means of livelihood in a strange land.

'I have followed the profession of a private tutor for five years,' he wrote, 'and during this time have felt so keenly its disagreeable nature that I had given it up altogether for a year and a half, and as I thought for ever. I was induced to undertake this occupation once again when I was in Warsaw, without due consideration, by the ill-founded hope that I should find this attempt more fortunate, and perhaps imperceptibly by a view to pecuniary advantage—a resolution, the vanity of which has given rise to my present embarrassments. I now, on the contrary, feel every day more strongly the necessity of going over again, before the years of youth have altogether passed away, all those things which the too-early praise of well-meaning, but unwise, teachers have caused me to neglect; and resigning all the ambitious views which have impeded my progress, to train myself to all of which I am capable, and leave the rest to Providence. This object I cannot attain anywhere more surely than in my fatherland. I have parents who cannot indeed relieve my necessities, but with whom I can live at less expense than elsewhere. I can there occupy myself with literary pursuits—my true means of culture—to which I must devote myself, and for which I have too much respect to print anything of the truth of which I am not thoroughly assured. My best course thus

seems to be to return home; but I am deprived of the means. I have only two ducats, and even these are not my own, for I have yet to pay for my lodgings. There appears, then, to be no rescue for me from this situation unless I can find some one who, although unknown to me, yet in reliance upon my honour, will advance me the necessary sum for the expenses of my journey, until the time when I can calculate with certainty on being able to make repayment. I am so convinced of a certain sacrifice of honour in thus placing it in pledge, that the very necessity of giving you this assurance seems to deprive me of a part of it myself; and the deep shame which thus falls upon me is the reason why I cannot make an application of this sort verbally, for I must have no witnesses of that shame. My honour seems to be really doubtful until the engagement be fulfilled, because it is always possible for the other party to suppose that I may never fulfil it. Thus I know that if you, Sir, should consent to my request, I would think of you with heartfelt respect and gratitude indeed, but yet with a kind of shame; and that only after I had redeemed my word would it be possible for me to call to mind, with perfect satisfaction, an acquaintance with which I hope to be honoured during life. If I should be found capable of forfeiting my pledge, my worldly reputation is in your hands. It is my intention to become an author in my own name, and when I leave Königsberg I wish to request from you introductions to some literary men of your acquaintance. To these, whose good opinion I would then owe to you, it would be your duty to communicate my disgrace, as it would generally be a duty, I think, to warn the world against a person of such incorrigible character as he must needs be who could approach a man whose atmosphere is untainted by falsehood, and, by assuming the outward mien of honesty, deceive his acuteness, and so laugh to scorn all virtue and honour. These were the considerations, Sir, which induced me to write this letter. As soon as I

can venture to hope I do not disturb you, I shall wait upon you to learn your resolution.'

To this appeal for pecuniary aid Kant did not accede. We can only imagine his refusal to have been occasioned by his poverty and not his will; for Fichte continued to entertain for him the same sentiments of passionate enthusiasm with which he had been inspired ever since he had first become acquainted with the Kantian philosophy.

Frustrated in his hopes of assistance from Kant, and nearly on the verge of starvation, he endeavoured to dispose of the manuscript of his 'Kritik aller Offenbarung;' but Hartung, the bookseller to whom Kant recommended him to apply, was from home, and he offered it in vain to any other. At last, when almost on the verge of despair, he received an invitation, through the Court-preacher Schulz, to a tutorship in the family of the Count of Krotrow, in the neighbourhood of Dantzig. Greatly as he disliked recommencing the irksome duties of tuition, necessity compelled him to the acceptance of the proposal; and he entered on his new employment dreading a repetition of his former experiences. This dread, as he subsequently found, was happily misplaced. The amiability and intelligence of the countess evoked his gratitude and admiration, so that he found his occupation not only lucrative, but exceedingly pleasant.

Through the instrumentality of his friends at Königsberg, he now made arrangements with Hartung for the publication of his 'Kritik aller Offenbarung.' An unexpected difficulty, however, prevented its immediate appearance. When the book was submitted to the censorship of the Dean of the Theological Faculty at Halle, where it was to be printed, he refused his sanction on account of the principle contained in it,—*That no proof of the divinity of a revelation can be derived from an appeal to miracles occurring in connection with it; but that the question of its authenticity can be decided only by an examination of*

its contents. Fichte urged that his book was a philosophical, not a theological essay, and that therefore it did not properly come under the cognisance of the theological faculty; but this plea was urged in vain. His friends then advised Fichte to withdraw the obnoxious passages, but on this point he was inflexible. He resolved that if his book could not be printed entire it should not be printed at all. Subsequently, however, this difficulty was happily conquered by a change in the censorship. The new dean, Dr. Knapp, did not partake in the scruples of his predecessor, and freely gave his consent to the publication. The work appeared at Easter 1792, and excited great attention in the literary world of Germany. It was published anonymously, and gained immense applause; partly, no doubt, because it was generally mistaken for the work of Kant himself. The celebrity acquired when the authorship was disclosed was the means of procuring Fichte the Chair of Philosophy at Jena, the offer of which was made him towards the end of 1793.

The high rectitude that was characteristic of Fichte through the whole career of his authorship is well portrayed in the preface of this his first important work:—

'Form and style,' he writes, 'are my affair; the censure or contempt which these may incur affects me alone, and that is of little moment. The result is the affair of truth, and *that* is of moment. That must be subjected to a strict, but careful and impartial examination. I at least have acted impartially. I may have erred, and it would be astonishing if I had not. What measure of correction I may deserve let the public decide. Every judgment, however expressed, I shall thankfully acknowledge; every objection which seems incompatible with the cause of truth, I shall meet as well as I can. To truth I solemnly devote myself, at this my first entrance into public life. Without respect of party or of reputation, I shall always acknowledge that to be truth which I recognise as such, come whence it

may ; and never acknowledge that which I do not believe. The public will pardon me for having thus spoken of myself, on this first and only occasion. It may be of little importance to the world to receive this assurance, but it is of importance to me to call upon it to bear witness to this my solemn vow.'

In the spring of 1793, Fichte left Dantzig for Zurich to accomplish the wish dearest to his heart. Rahn, the father of his betrothed, was anxious to see his daughter settled in life before his death ; and this wish, coupled with the fact that Fichte was now in receipt of a fair income, led to a day being definitely fixed for the marriage. It was arranged that wherever Fichte's abode might ultimately be fixed, the venerable old father should still enjoy the unremitting care and attention of his daughter. And on October 22, 1793, the marriage between Johann Gottlieb Fichte and Johanna Maria Rahn was duly solemnised.

Now for the first time the worldly prospects of Fichte seemed to be auspicious. Now for the first time there appeared to be for him some reasonable augury of happiness. United to a woman whom he tenderly loved ; in intercourse with the best intellects of the day ; in possession of a competent income, Fortune seemed to be as lavish of her favours as hitherto she had been niggard. It was but a transient gleam of sunshine. Prosperity is seldom mated with philosophy ; and that which both Fichte and his friends regarded as the smile of Fortune was but Misfortune playing with her victim. An accusation of atheism was brought against him ; an accusation as unjust as it was unfounded, but which was nevertheless sufficiently well directed to cost him his Chair of Philosophy at Jena.

Never was the stigma of atheist more misplaced ; never more inappropriate. 'God intoxicated' was a title fully as applicable to Fichte as to Spinoza. Possibly even more so. The pantheism of Spinoza was intellectual more than emotional ; the pantheism of Fichte was wholly emotional.

Listen to this for instance, and judge if there be anything of atheism in it.[1]

'Sublime and living Will, named by no name, compassed by no thought, I may well raise my soul to Thee, for Thou and I are not divided. Thy voice sounds within me, mine resounds in Thee; and all my thoughts, if they are but good and true, live in Thee also. In Thee, the incomprehensible, I myself, and the world in which I live, become clearly comprehensible to me; all the secrets of my existence are laid open, and perfect harmony arises in my soul.

'Thou art best known to the childlike, simple, devoted mind. To it Thou art the searcher of hearts, who seest its inmost depths; the ever present true witness of its thoughts who knowest its truth, who knowest it though all the world know it not. Thou art the Father who ever desirest its good, who rulest all things for the best. To Thy will it unhesitatingly resigns itself: "Do with me," it says, "what thou wilt; I know that it is good, for it is Thou who dost it." The inquisitive understanding which has heard of Thee, but seen Thee not, would teach us Thy nature; and, as Thy image, shows us a monstrous and incongruous shape, which the sagacious laugh at and the wise and good abhor.

'I hide my face before Thee, and lay my hand upon my mouth. How Thou art, and seemest to Thine own being, I can never know, any more than I can assume Thy nature. After thousand upon thousand of spirit-lives, I shall comprehend Thee as little as I do now in this earthly house. That which I conceive, becomes finite through my very conception of it; and this can never, even by endless exaltation, rise into the infinite. Thou differest from men, not in degree but in nature. In every stage of their advancement they think of Thee as a greater *man*, and still

[1] 'Bestimmung des Menschen,' book iii.; Dr. W. Smith's Translation.

a greater; but never as God—the Infinite—whom no measure can mete. I have only this discursive, progressive thought, and I can conceive of no other:—how can I venture to ascribe it to Thee? In the idea of *person* there are imperfections, limitations:—how can I clothe Thee with it without these?"

'I will not attempt that which the imperfection of my finite nature forbids, and which would be useless to me; *how* Thou art, I may not know. But Thy relations to me—the mortal—and to all mortals, lie open before my eyes—were I but what I ought to be, and surround me more clearly than the consciousness of my own existence. Thou workest in me the knowledge of my duty, of my vocation in the world of reasonable beings; how, I know not, nor need I to know. Thou knowest what I think and what I will: *how* Thou canst know, through what act Thou bringest about that consciousness, I cannot understand; nay, I know that the idea of an act, of a particular act of consciousness, belongs to me alone, and not to Thee, the Infinite one. Thou willest that my free obedience shall bring with it eternal consequences: the act of Thy will I cannot comprehend, I know only it is not like mine. Thou doest, and Thy will itself is the deed; but the way of Thy working is not as my ways: I cannot trace it. Thou livest and art, for Thou knowest and willest, and workest, omnipresent to finite reason; but Thou art not as I now, and always must, conceive of being.'

Surely this is not atheism. It is scarcely even scepticism. Fichte's standpoint is this: we cannot know God. The Finite is contained in the Infinite, but cannot comprehend it, for He is *everything*. All our life is His life. He is the spiritual bond which unites all free beings together. All death in nature is birth, the assumption of a new garment, to replace the old vesture which humanity has laid aside in its progress to higher being. Of Him—the infinite one—of the mode of His being, we know nothing, nor need we to know. We cannot pierce the inaccessible light in

which He dwells; but through the shadows which veil His presence from us, an endless stream of life and beauty reveals itself, bearing us on to higher modes of ever fuller life, to brighter forms of still more varying beauty. The living principle of a living universe must be infinite. Consciousness, personality,[1] and even substance carry with them the idea of necessary limitation, and are as attributes of relation and limited beings: to affirm these of God is to bring Him down to the rank of relative and limited beings. The Divinity can only be thought of by us as pure intelligence, spiritual life and energy; but to comprehend this intelligence in a conception, or to describe it in words, is manifestly impossible. All attempts to embrace the Infinite in the conceptions of the finite are, and must be, only accommodations to the frailties of man. God, therefore, is an object of faith, not of knowledge; to be approached by the moral sense, not by the understanding. 'Hence it is an error to say that it is doubtful whether or not there is a God. It is not doubtful, but the most certain of all certainties—nay, the foundation of all other certainties—the one absolutely valid objective truth, that there is a moral order in the world; that to every rational being is assigned his particular place in that order, and the work which he has to do; that his destiny, in so far as it is not occasioned by his own conduct, is the result of this plan; that in no other way can even a hair fall from his head, nor a sparrow fall to the ground around him: that every true and good action prospers, and every bad action fails;

[1] 'You attribute personality and consciousness to God,' he said, when accused of atheism, on account of his conception of God, 'but what, then, do you call personality and consciousness? That, no doubt, which you have found in yourselves, become cognizant of in yourselves, and distinguished by that name. But if you will only give the slightest attention to the nature of your conception, you will see that you do not, and cannot, conceive of this without limitation and finality. By attributing that predicate to this Being, you in consequence make of it a finite one, a creature like yourselves; you have not, as was your wish, conceived God, but merely the multiplied representation of yourselves.'

and that all things must work together for good to those who truly love goodness. On the other hand, no one who reflects a moment, and honestly avows the result of his reflection, can remain in doubt that the conception of God as a *particular substance* is impossible and contradictory; and it is right candidly to say this, and to silence the babbling of the schools in order that the true religion of cheerful virtue may be established in its room.

'Two great poets have expressed this faith of good and thinking men with inimitable beauty. Such an one may well adopt their language:—

'Who dares to say
"I believe in God?"
Who dares to name Him
And to profess
"I believe in Him?"
Who can feel
And yet affirm
"I believe Him not?"
The all-embracer,
The all-sustainer,
Doth He not embrace, support
Thee, me, Himself?
Doth not the vault of Heaven arch o'er us there?
Doth not the earth lie firmly here below?
And do not the eternal stars
Rise on us with their friendly beams?
And doth not the All
Press on thy head and heart,
And weave itself around thee, visibly and invisibly,
In eternal mystery?
Fill thy heart with it till it o'erflow;
And in the feeling when thou'rt wholly blest
Then call it what thou wilt—
Happiness! Heart! Love! God!
I have no name for it:
Feeling is all; name is but sound and smoke,
Veiling the glow of heaven.[1]

[1] Goethe's 'Faust.'

'And the second sings:—

> And God is! a holy will that abides
> Though the human will may falter;
> High over both space and time it rides
> The high thought that will never alter:
> And while all things in change eternal roll,
> It endures, through change a motionless soul.[1]'

The essay from which the above passage is quoted is entitled 'On the Grounds of our Faith in a Divine Government of the World.' And it was this essay which was chiefly instrumental in procuring for Fichte the accusation of atheism, for the *Bestimmung des Menschen* was not published till afterwards.

Dismissed from the Chair of Philosophy, he was in nearly as penniless a condition as in the days of his student life, having in addition the necessities of his wife to provide for as well as for those of himself. He had not been in the occupation of the Chair at Jena, however, without having managed to attract the friendship of his compeers and the reverent admiration of the students. Two numerously signed petitions were presented to the authorities, praying for his recall. And when these were found to be unavailing, his young disciples caused a medallion of their beloved teacher to be struck, in testimony of their admiration and esteem.

After the manner in which he had been treated there, Fichte felt it would be impossible for him to remain any longer at Jena: and applied to Frederick William of Prussia for permission to reside in his dominions, with the view of earning a livelihood by literary exertion and private teaching. The answer of the Prussian monarch was characteristic of his known tolerance and appreciation of intellect. 'If,' said he, 'Fichte is so peaceful a citizen, and so free from all dangerous associations as he is said to be, I

[1] Schiller's 'Worte des Glaubens.'

willingly accord him a residence in my dominions. As to his religious principles, it is not for the State to decide upon them.' After living a life of vicissitudes and of the most ardent work, Fichte was in 1810 unanimously elected Rector of the University of Berlin, which office he retained, without being molested by a repetition of his former persecutions, until his death. While in attendance upon his beloved wife he received the seeds of the fever with which she had been attacked; and on the night of January 27, 1814, he passed away, having but barely attained his fifty-second year.

The *Bestimmung des Menschen* (Vocation of Man) is, we think, Fichte's most interesting work; and as it shows very clearly the pantheism inherent in his philosophy, we will proceed to give an abstract of it.

The first book is entitled 'Doubt.'

It opens with an enquiry into what he himself, his ('Ego' 'that mystery within us' as Carlyle terms it, which calls itself 'I') is an investigation into its vocation, what part it is to fulfil in the course of nature. He finds that he is but a link in the long chain of necessity; that he is the consequent of a previous antecedent, and that herein he differs not from animals or plants. 'Nature proceeds throughout the whole infinite series of her possible determinations without outward incentive, and the succession of these changes is not arbitrary, but follows strict and invariable laws. Whatever exists in nature, necessarily exists as it does exist, and it is absolutely impossible that it should be otherwise. I enter within an unbroken chain of phenomena, in which every link is determined by that which has preceded it, and which, in its turn, determines the next; so that, were I able to trace backward the causes through which alone any given moment could have come into actual existence, and to follow out the consequences which must necessarily flow from it, I should then be able at that moment, and by means of thought alone, to discover all

possible conditions of the universe, both past and future: past, by interpreting the given moment; future, by foreseeing its results. Every part contains the whole, for *only* through the whole is each part what it is; but through the whole it is *necessarily* what it is.

'In every moment of her duration Nature is one connected whole: in every moment each individual part must be what it is, because all the others are what they are; and you could not remove a single grain of sand from its place without thereby, although perhaps imperceptibly to you, changing something throughout all parts of the immeasurable whole. But every moment of this duration is determined by all past moments, and will determine all future moments; and you cannot conceive even the position of a grain of sand other than it is in the present, without being compelled to conceive the whole indefinite past to have been other than it has been, and the whole indefinite future other than it will be. Make the experiment, for instance, with this grain of quicksand. Suppose it to lie some few paces further inland than it does:—then must the storm-wind that drove it in from the sea have been stronger than it actually was—then must the preceding state of the weather, by which this wind was occasioned and its degree of strength determined, have been different from what it actually was; and the previous state by which this particular weather was determined, and so on; and thus you have, without any stay or limit, a wholly different temperature of the air from that which really existed, and a different constitution of the bodies which possess an influence over this temperature, and over which, on the other hand, it exercises such an influence. How can you know—since it is not permitted us to penetrate the arcana of nature, and it is therefore allowable to speak of possibilities—how can you know, that in such a state of weather as may have been necessary to carry this grain of sand a few paces further inland, some one of your forefathers

might not have perished from hunger, or cold, or heat, before begetting that son from whom you are descended; and thus you might never have been at all, and all that you have ever done, and all that you ever hope to do in this world, must have been obstructed, in order that a grain of sand might be in a different place?

'I myself, with all that I call mine, am a link in this chain of the rigid necessity of nature. There was a time, so others tell me who were then alive—and I am compelled by reasoning to admit such a time of which I have no immediate consciousness—there was a time in which I was not, and a moment in which I began to be. I then only existed for others, not yet for myself. Since then, my self, my self-consciousness, has gradually unfolded itself, and I have discovered in myself certain capacities and faculties, wants and natural desires. I am a definite creature which came into being at a certain time.

'I have not come into being by my own power. It would be the highest absurdity to suppose that I was before I came into existence, in order to bring myself into existence. I have, then, been called into being by another power beyond myself. And by what power but the universal power of nature, since I too am a part of nature? The time at which my existence began, and the attributes with which I came into being, were determined by this universal power of nature; and all the forms under which these inborn attributes have since manifested themselves, and will manifest themselves as long as I have a being, are determined by the same power. It was impossible that instead of me another should have come into existence; it is impossible that this being, once here, should at any moment of its existence be any other than what it is and will be.

'That my successive states of being have been accompanied by consciousness, and that some of them, such as thoughts, resolutions, and the like, appear to be nothing

but varied modes of consciousness, need not perplex my reasonings. It is the natural constitution of the plant to develop itself, of the animal to move, of man to think, all after fixed laws. Why should I hesitate to acknowledge the last as the manifestation of an original power of nature, as well as the first and second? Nothing could hinder me from doing so but mere wonder; thought being assuredly a far higher and more subtle operation of nature than the formation of a plant or the proper motion of an animal. But how can I accord to such a feeling any influence whatever upon the calm conclusions of reason? I cannot indeed explain how the power of nature can produce thought; but can I better explain its operation in the formation of a plant, or in the motion of an animal? To attempt to deduce thought from any mere combination of matter is a perversity into which I shall not fall; but can I then explain from it even the formation of the simplest moss? Those original powers of nature cannot be explained, for it is only by them that we can explain everything which is susceptible of explanation. Thought exists, its existence is absolute and independent, just as the formative power of nature exists absolutely and independently. It is in nature, for the thinking being arises and develops himself according to the laws of nature; therefore thought exists through nature. There is in nature an original thinking power, as there is an original formative power.

'This original thinking power of the universe goes forth and develops itself in all possible modes of which it is capable, as the other original forces of nature go forth and assume all forms possible to them. I, like the plant, am a particular mode or manifestation of the formative power; like the animal, a particular mode or manifestation of the power of motion; and besides these, I am also a particular power or manifestation of the thinking power; and the union of these three original powers into one—into one

harmonious development—is the distinguishing characteristic of my species, as it is the distinguishing characteristic of the plant species to be merely a mode or manifestation of the formative power.'

Thus does Fichte gradually work out his idea of the necessity of his own being. By such an idea, he believes, a sort of comprehensive supervision is introduced into the whole fabric of knowledge. Consciousness is no longer that stranger in nature whose connection with existence is so incomprehensible, but becomes one of its necessary manifestations. By such an idea is it plainly shown that Nature rises gradually in the fixed series of her productions. In rude matter she is a simple existence, in organised matter she returns within herself to internal activity: in the plant to produce form; in the animal, motion; in man, as her highest masterpiece, she turns inward that she may perceive and contemplate herself, and from being mere existence becomes existence and consciousness in one. Give to Nature the determination of one single element of a person, let it seem to be ever so trivial, the course of a muscle, the turn of a hair, and, had she an universal consciousness, and were able to reply to thee, she could tell them all the thoughts which could belong to this person during the whole period of his conscious existence. In this system, also, the phenomenon of our consciousness which we call Will becomes thoroughly intelligible. A volition is the immediate consciousness of the activity of any of the powers of Nature within us. The immediate consciousness of an effort of these powers which has not yet become a reality because it is hemmed in by opposing powers, is, in consciousness, inclination, or desire; the struggle of contending powers is irresolution. The victory of one is the determination of the will. If the power which strives after activity be only that which we have in common with the plant or the animal, there arises a desire which is unworthy of our rank in the order of things; and, according to a common

use of language, may be called a low one. If this striving power be the whole undivided force of humanity, then is the desire worthy of our nature, and it may be called a high one. The latter effort, considered absolutely, may be called a moral law. The activity of this latter is a virtuous will, and the course of action resulting from it is virtue. The triumphs of the former, not in harmony with the latter, is vice; such a triumph over the latter, and despite its opposition, is crime. The power which, on each individual occasion, proves triumphant, triumphs of necessity; its superiority is determined by the whole connection of the universe, and hence by the same connection is the vice or crime of each individual irrevocably determined. Give to Nature, once more, the course of a muscle, the turn of a hair, in any particular individual, and had she the power of universal thought and could answer thee, she would be able to declare all the good and evil deeds of his life from the beginning to the end of it. The virtuous man is a noble product of Nature; the vicious an ignoble one. But both are necessary results of the connected system of the universe.

'My inquiry is closed, and my desire of knowledge satisfied. I know what I am, and wherein the nature of my species consists. I am a manifestation, determined by the whole system of the universe, of a power of nature which is determined by itself. To understand thoroughly my particular personal being in its deepest sources is impossible, for I cannot penetrate into the innermost recesses of Nature. But I am immediately conscious of this my personal existence. I know right well what I am at the present moment; I can for the most part remember what I have been formerly; and I shall learn what I shall be when what is now future shall become present experience.

'I cannot, indeed, make use of this discovery in the regulation of my actions, for I do not truly act at all, but

Nature acts in me; and to make myself anything else than that for which Nature has intended me, is what I cannot even propose to myself, for I am not the author of my own being, but Nature has made me myself, and all that I am. I may repent, and rejoice, and form good resolutions, although, strictly speaking, I cannot even do this, for all these things come to me of themselves, when it is appointed for them to come; but most certainly I cannot, by all my repentance, and by all my resolutions, produce the smallest change in that which I must once for all inevitably become. I stand under the inexorable power of rigid necessity; should she have destined me to become a fool and a profligate, a fool and a profligate without doubt I shall become; should she have destined me to be wise and good, wise and good I shall doubtless be. There is neither blame nor merit to her, nor to me. She stands under her own laws; I under hers. I see this, and feel that my tranquillity would be best ensured by subjecting my wishes also to that necessity to which my being is wholly subject.'

And yet,—Fichte cannot help feeling that this doctrine of necessity does not wholly satisfy his doubts; it is not a completely adequate answer to his inquiry. True, his body is a machine; no power that he can exert will prevent his heart from beating, but surely he has power, if he have the will, to prevent himself from acts of vice. The bodily part of him seems but to be the manifestation of a foreign power, but the mind is surely something more than this. He can prevent himself from profligacy if he choose. Pernicious, paralysing to all man's highest efforts, is the doctrine that would teach him that he is but the sport of circumstances. And yet,—can a fool make himself wise?

Doubts seem to overwhelm our philosopher. According to the one doctrine, he is wholly independent of Nature, and of any law which he does not impose upon himself; according to the other, he is but a strictly determined link in the chain of Nature. The system of freedom satisfies

his heart, the opposite system destroys and annihilates it. 'To stand, cold and unmoved, amid the current of events, a passive mirror of fugitive and passing phenomena, this existence is insupportable to me; I scorn and detest it. I will love; I will lose myself in sympathy; I will know the joy and grief of life. I myself am the highest object of this sympathy; and the only mode in which I can satisfy its requirements is by my actions. I will do all for the best, I will rejoice when I have done right, I will grieve when I have done wrong; and even this sorrow shall be sweet to me, for it is a chord of sympathy, a pledge of future amendment. In love only there is life, without it is death and annihilation.

'But coldly and insolently does the opposite system advance, and turn this love into a mockery. If I listen to it, I am not, and I cannot act. The object of my most intimate attachment is a phantom of the brain—a gross and palpable delusion. Not I, but a foreign and to me wholly unknown power, acts in me; and it is a matter of indifference to me how this power unfolds itself. I stand abashed, with my warm affections and my virtuous will, and blush for what I know to be best and purest in my nature, for the sake of which alone I would exist, as for a ridiculous folly. What is holiest in me is given over for a prey to scorn.'

'I cannot remain in this state of indecision; on the solution of this question depends my whole peace and dignity. As impossible is it for me to decide; I have absolutely no ground of decision in favour of the one opinion or the other. Intolerable state of uncertainty and irresolution! Through the best and most courageous resolution of my life, I have been reduced to this! What power can deliver me from it? What power can deliver me from myself?'

So ends the First Part. The Second Part is entitled

'Knowledge,' and consists of a dialogue between Fichte and a supposed Spirit.

Fichte, cast down amid his doubts, mourning the state of uncertainty into which he falleth, suddenly hears a voice murmuring into his ear:

'Poor mortal! Thou heapest error upon error, and fanciest thyself wise. Thou tremblest before the phantoms which thou hast thyself toiled to create. Dare to become truly wise. I bring thee no new revelation. What I can teach thee thou already knowest, and thou hast but to recall it to thy remembrance. I cannot deceive thee; for thou, thyself, wilt acknowledge me to be in the right; and shouldst thou be deceived, thou wilt be deceived by thyself. Take courage. Listen to me.'

The Spirit then proceeds to unfold to Fichte the purely subjective character of all human knowledge; he shows him that his doubts, his hopes, his fears, are but products of his own imagination. Why should he stand aghast at the idea that he is but a link in the long chain of necessity; that he differs not in kind, but only in degree, from animals, or vegetables, or plants? What knows he of nature, animate or inanimate, save what his own consciousness informs him? Were he born blind, what knowledge could he have of yellow, or green, or red? Were he born deaf, what acquaintance could he have with music, or song, or speech? 'Strictly speaking, thou hast no *consciousness of things*; but only a consciousness of a consciousness of things. All knowledge is merely a knowledge of thyself; thy consciousness never goes beyond thyself. What thou assumest to be a consciousness of the object is nothing but a consciousness of thine own supposition of an object, which, according to an inward law of thy thought, thou dost necessarily make simultaneously with the sensation itself.' '*Our consciousness of things out of ourselves is absolutely nothing more than the product of our own presentative faculty.* With regard to external things, we can

produce in this way nothing more than simply what we know, *i.e.*, what is established by means of our consciousness itself, as the result of our being possessed with consciousness *generally*, and of this particular determinate consciousness subject to such and such laws.'

Fichte is obliged to confess the truth of this demonstration. He does know nothing beyond and out of himself.

'Then,' continues the Spirit, 'thou canst not then object to the bolder statement of the same proposition; that in that which we call knowledge and observation of outward things, we at all times recognise and observe ourselves only; and that in all our consciousness we know of nothing whatever but of ourselves and of our own determinate states. I say, thou wilt not be able to advance aught against this proposition; for if the external world *generally* arises for us only through our own consciousness, what is particular and multiform in this external world can arise in no other way; and if the connection between what is external to us and ourselves is merely a connection in our own thought, then is the connection of the multifarious objects of the external world among ourselves undoubtedly this and no other. As clearly as I have now pointed out to thee the origin of this system of objects beyond thyself and their relation to thee, could I also show thee the law according to which there arises an infinite multiplicity of such objects, mutually connected, reciprocally determining each other with rigid necessity, and thus forming a complete world-system, as thou thyself hast well described it; and I only spare myself this task because I find that thou hast already admitted the conclusion for the sake of which alone I should have undertaken it.

'With this insight,' continues the Spirit, 'be free, and for ever released from the fear which has degraded and tormented thee! Thou wilt no longer tremble at a neces-

sity which exists only in thine own thought; no longer fear to be crushed by things which are the product of thine own mind; no longer place thyself, the thinking being, in the same class with the thoughts which proceed from thee. As long as thou couldst believe that a system of things, such as thou hast described, really existed out of, and independently of thee, and that thou thyself mightest be but a link in this chain, such a fear was well grounded. Now, when thou hast seen that all this exists only in and through thyself, thou wilt doubtless no longer fear that which thou dost now recognise as thine own creation. It was from this fear that I wished to set thee free. Thou art delivered from it, and I now leave thee to thyself.'

'Stay, deceitful Spirit,' exclaims Fichte. 'Is this all the wisdom towards which thou hast directed my hopes, and dost thou boast that thou hast set me free? Thou hast set me free, it is true:—thou hast absolved me from all dependence; for thou hast transformed myself and everything around me on which I could possibly be dependent, into nothing. Thou hast abolished necessity by annihilating all existence. Not only Nature, but myself, has thou annihilated. As I have been compelled to admit that which I call sweet, red, hard, and so on, is nothing more than my own affection; and that only by intuition and thought it is transposed out of myself into space, and regarded as the property of something else existing independently of me; so shall I also be compelled to admit that this body, with all its organs, is nothing but a sensible manifestation, in a determinate portion of space, of myself, the inward thinking being; that I, the spiritual entity, the pure intelligence, and I, the bodily frame in the physical world, are one and the same, merely viewed from two different sides, and conceived of by two different faculties; the first by pure thought, the second by external intuition.

'There is thus nothing enduring, either out of me, or in

me, but only a ceaseless change. I know of no being, not even of my own. There is no being. I myself absolutely know not nor am not. Pictures are:—they are the only things which exist, and they know of themselves after the fashion of pictures:—pictures which float past without there being anything past which they float; which by means of like pictures, are connected with each other:—pictures without anything which is pictured in them; without significance and without aim. I myself am one of these pictures; nay, I am not even one of these, but merely a confused picture of the pictures. All reality is transformed into a strange dream, without a life which is dreamed of, and without a mind which dreams it; into a dream which is woven together into a dream of itself. Intuition is the dream; thought—the source of all the being and all the reality which I imagine, of my own being, my own powers, and my own purposes—is the dream of that dream.'

'Short-sighted mortal!' replies the Spirit, 'I have allowed thee to deduce the results of our inquiry in thine own way, to analyse them, and to clothe them in hateful expressions. Didst thou then think that these results were less known to me than to thyself—that I did not understand as well as thou, how by these principles all reality was thoroughly annihilated and transformed into a dream? Didst thou then take me for a blind admirer and advocate of this system, as a complete system of the human mind?

'Thou didst desire to *know*, and thou hast taken a wrong road. Thou didst seek knowledge where no knowledge can reach; and hadst even persuaded thyself that thou hadst obtained an insight into something which is opposed to the very nature of all insight. Thou desiredst to know of thy knowledge. Art thou surprised that in this way thou didst discover nothing more than that of which thou desiredst to know—thy knowledge itself; and wouldst thou have had it otherwise? What has its origin in and

through knowledge is merely knowledge. All knowledge, however, is but pictures, representations. A system of mere knowledge is necessarily a system of mere pictures, wholly without reality, significance or aim. Didst thou expect anything else? Wouldst thou change the very nature of thy mind, and desire thy knowledge to be something more than knowledge?

'The reality, in which thou didst formerly believe—a material world existing independently of thee, of which thou didst fear to become the slave—has vanished; for this whole material world arises only through knowledge and is itself our knowledge; but knowledge is not reality, just because it is knowledge. Thou hast seen through the illusion; and without belying thy better insight, thou canst never again give thyself up to it. This is the sole merit which I claim for the system which we have together discovered: it destroys and annihilates error. It cannot give us truth, for in itself it is absolutely empty. Thou dost now seek, and with good right, as I well know, something real lying beyond mere appearance, another reality than that which has thus been annihilated. But in vain wouldst thou labour to create this reality by means of thy knowledge, or out of thy knowledge; or to embrace it by thy understanding. If thou hast no other organ by which to apprehend it, thou wilt never find it.

'But thou hast such an organ. Arouse and animate it, and thou wilt attain to perfect tranquillity. I leave thee alone with thyself.'

So ends the Second Part. The Third Part is entitled 'Faith.'

What, then, is this organ the mysterious Spirit tells me I possess? What is this faculty of apprehension? What is the nature of the object it is to apprehend? What is this something lying beyond all presentation, towards which I stretch forward with such ardent longing? What is the power with which it draws me towards it? What is the

central point in my soul to which it is attached, and with which it can only be effaced?

'Not merely to KNOW, but according to thy knowledge to DO, is thy vocation:'—thus is it loudly proclaimed in the innermost depths of my soul. 'Not for idle contemplation of thyself; not for brooding over devout sensations; no, for action art thou here; thine action, and thine action alone, determines thy worth.'

I feel within me an impulse and an effort towards outward activity; this appears to be true, and to be the only truth belonging to the matter. Since it is I who feel this impulse, and since I cannot pass beyond myself, either with my whole consciousness, or, in particular, with my capacity of sensation—since this *I* itself is the last point at which I am conscious of this impulse, it certainly appears to me as an impulse founded in myself, to an activity also founded in myself. Might it not be, however, that this impulse although unperceived by me, is in reality the impulse of a foreign power invisible to me, and that notion of independence merely a delusion, arising from my sphere of vision being limited to myself alone? I have no reason to assume this, but just as little reason to deny it. I must confess that I absolutely know nothing, and can know nothing about it.

I say that I feel this impulse. Is it therefore I myself who say so, and think so while I say it? Do I then feel, or only think that I feel? Is not all which I call feeling only a presentation produced by my objective process of thought, and indeed the first transition point of all objectivity? And then again, do I really think, or do I merely think that I think? And do I think that I really think, or merely that I possess the idea of thinking? What can hinder speculation from raising such questions, and continuing to raise them without end? What can I answer, and where is there a point at which I can command such questionings to cease? I know that if I am not merely to

play another perplexing game with this system, but intend really and practically to adopt it, I must refuse obedience to that voice within me. I cannot *will* to act, for according to that system I cannot *know* whether I can really act or not:—I can never believe that I truly act; that which seems to be my action must appear to me as entirely without meaning, as a mere delusive picture. All earnestness and all interest is withdrawn from my life; and life, as well as thought, is transformed into a mere play, which proceeds from nothing, and tends to nothing. Shall I then refuse obedience to that inward voice? I will not do so. I will freely accept the vocation which this impulse assigns to me, and in this resolution I will lay hold at once of thought, in all its reality and truthfulness, and on the reality of all things which are presupposed therein. I will restrict myself to the position of natural thought in which this impulse places me; and cast from me all those over-refined and subtile inquiries which alone could make me doubtful of its truth.

I understand thee now, sublime Spirit! I have found the organ by which to apprehend this reality, and, with this, probably all other reality. Knowledge is not this organ:—no knowledge can be its own foundation, its own proof; every other knowledge presupposes another higher knowledge on which it is founded, and to this ascent there is no end. It is Faith, that voluntary acquiescence in the view which is naturally presented to us, because only through this view we can fulfil our vocation; this it is, which first lends a sanction to knowledge, and raises to certainty and conviction that which without it might be mere delusion. It is not knowledge, but a resolution of the Will to admit the validity of knowledge.

Let me for ever hold fast by this doctrine, which is no mere verbal distinction, but a true and deep one, bearing with it the most important consequences for my whole existence and character. All my conviction is but faith;

and it proceeds from the will, not from the understanding. With freedom and consciousness I have returned to the point at which Nature had left me. I accept that which she announces; but I do not accept it because I must; I believe it because I will.

Phenomena may deceive; appearances betray; there may be no such thing as absolute existence out of, and beyond, myself; but the Voice of Duty makes itself heard, and tells me that the whole of my vocation lies in the sphere of active, moral Work. There is something that I am called upon to do, simply that it may be done; something to avoid doing, solely that it may be left undone. If we are to know nothing, and to do nothing; if our lives are but the sport of circumstance, then indeed is this world a dream and a delusion; and it would not be worth the trouble to have lived, and played out this ever-repeated game, which tends to nothing, and signifies nothing. Shall I eat and drink only that I may hunger and thirst, and eat and drink again, till the grave which is open beneath my feet shall swallow me up, and I myself become the food of worms? Shall I beget beings like myself, that they too may eat and drink and die, and leave behind them beings like themselves to do the same as I have done? To what purpose this ever-revolving circle, this ceaseless and unvarying round, in which all things appear only to pass away, and pass away only that they may reappear as they were before; this monster continually devouring itself that it may again bring itself forth, and bringing itself forth only that it may again devour itself? This can never be the vocation of my being, and of all being. There must be something which is because it has come into existence; and endures, and cannot come anew, having once become such as it is. And this abiding existence must be produced amid the vicissitudes of the transitory and perishable, maintain itself there, and be borne onwards, pure and inviolate, upon the waves of time.

No!—I will not refuse obedience to the law of Duty; as surely as I live and am, I will obey absolutely because it commands. This resolution shall be first and highest in my mind; that by which everything else is determined, but which itself is determined by nothing else; this shall be the innermost principle of my spiritual life.

The mist of delusion clears away from before my sight. I receive a new organ, and a new world opens before me. It is disclosed to me only by the law of reason, and answers only to that law in my spirit. I apprehend this world—limited as I am by my sensuous view, I must thus name the unnameable – I apprehend this world merely in and through the end which is promised to my obedience; it is in reality nothing else than this necessary end itself which reason annexes to the law of Duty.

And now the Eternal World rises before me more brightly, and the fundamental law of its order stands clearly and distinctly apparent to my mental vision. In this world, *Will* alone, as it lies concealed from mortal eye in the secret obscurities of the soul, is the first link in a chain of consequences that stretches through the whole invisible realms of spirit, as, in the physical world, *action*, a certain movement of matter, is the first link in a material chain that runs through the whole system of Nature. The Will is the efficient, living principle of the world of reason, as Motion is the efficient living principle of the world of sense. I stand in the centre of two entirely opposite worlds: a visible world, in which action is the only moving power, and an invisible and absolutely incomprehensible world, in which will is the ruling principle. I am one of the primitive forces of both these worlds. My will embraces both.

This, then, is my whole sublime vocation, my true nature. I am a member of two orders: the one purely spiritual, in which I rule by my will alone; the other sensuous, in which I operate by my deed. The whole end

of reason is pure activity, absolutely by itself alone, having no need of any instrument out of itself—independence of everything which is not reason—absolute freedom. The will is the living principle of reason—is itself reason, when purely and simply apprehended. It is only the Infinite Reason that lives immediately and wholly in this purely spiritual order. The finite reason, which does not of itself constitute the world of reason, but is only one of its many members, lives necessarily at the same time in a sensuous order, that is to say, in one which presents to it another object beyond a purely spiritual activity. The Sublime Will pursues no solitary path withdrawn from the other parts of the world of reason. There is a spiritual bond between Him and all finite and rational beings; and He himself is this spiritual bond of the rational universe. Thus do I approach—the mortal must speak in his own language—thus do I approach that Infinite Will, and the voice of conscience in my soul is the channel through which this influence descends upon me. That voice, sensualised by my environment, and translated into my language, is the oracle of the Eternal World, which announces to me how I am to perform my part in the order of the spiritual universe, or in the Infinite Will, who is Himself that order. I stand connected with the ONE who alone has existence, and thus do I participate in His being. There is nothing real, lasting, imperishable in me but these two elements: the voice of conscience and my free obedience. By the first, the spiritual world bows down to me, and embraces me as one of its members; by the second, I raise myself into this world, apprehend it, and react upon it. That Infinite Will is the mediator between it and me; for He himself is the original source both of it and me. This is the One True and Imperishable for which my soul yearns even from its inmost depths; all else is mere appearence, ever vanishing, and ever returning in a new semblance.

This Will unites me with himself; He also unites me with all finite beings like myself, and is the common mediator between us all. This Eternal Will is thus assuredly the creator of the world, in the only way in which He can be so, and in the only way in which it needs creation, in the finite reason. Only in our minds has He created a world, at least that *from which* we unfold it, and that *by which* we unfold; the voice of Duty, and harmonious feelings, intuitions, and laws of thought. It is His light through which we behold the light, and all that it reveals to us. In our minds He still creates this world, and acts upon it by acting upon our minds through the call of Duty. In our minds He upholds this world, and thereby the finite existence of which alone we are capable, by continually evolving from each state of our existence other states in succession. All our life is His life. We are in His hand, and abide therein, and no one can pluck us out of His hand. We are eternal because He is eternal.

The universe appears before my eyes clothed in a more glorious form. The dead heavy mass, which only filled up space has vanished; and in its place there flows onward, with the rushing music of mighty waves, an eternal stream of life and power and action, which issues from the original source of all life—from Thy life, Oh Infinite One, for all life is Thy life.

I am related to Thee, and what I behold around me is related to me. In all the forms that surround me I behold the reflection of my own being, broken up into countless diversified shapes, as the morning sun broken in a thousand dewdrops, sparkles towards itself.

Thy life, as alone the Infinite mind can conceive it, is self-forming, self-manifesting Will: this life clothed to the eye of the mortal with manifold sensuous forms, flows forth through me, and throughout the immeasurable universe of Nature. *Here* it streams as self-creating and self-forming matter through my veins and muscles, and

pours its abundance into the tree, the flower, the grass. Creative life flows forth into one continuous stream, drop by drop, through all forms, and into all places where my eye can follow it, and reveals itself to me, in a different shape in each various corner of the universe, as the same power by which, in secret darkness, my own frame was formed. *There*, in free play, it leaps and dances as spontaneous motion in the animal, and manifests itself in each new form as a new, peculiar, self-subsisting world: the same power which, invisibly to me, moves and animates my own frame. Everything that lives and moves follows this universal impulse, this one principle of all motion, which, from one end of the universe to the other, guides the harmonious movement; in the animal *without freedom*; in me, from whom in the visible world the motion proceeds, althought it has not its source in me, *with freedom*.

Through that which to others seems a mere dead mass, my eye beholds this eternal life and movement in every vein of sensible and spiritual nature, and sees this life rising in ever-increasing growth, and ever purifying itself to a more spiritual expression. The universe is to me no longer that ever-recurring circle, that eternally repeated play, that monster swallowing itself up, only to bring itself forth again as it was before; it has become transfigured before me, and now bears the one stamp of spiritual life—a constant progress towards higher perfection in a line that runs out into the Infinite.

The sun rises and sets, the stars sink and reappear, the spheres hold their circle-dance; but they never again return as they disappeared, and even in the bright fountain of life itself there is life and progress. Every hour which they lead on, every morning and every evening, sinks with new increase upon the world; new life and new love descend from the spheres like dewdrops from the clouds, and encircle Nature as the cool night the earth.

All Death in Nature is Birth, and in Death itself ap-

pears visibly the exaltation of Life. There is no destructive principle in Nature, for Nature throughout is pure, unclouded life; it is not death that kills; but the more living life, which, concealed behind the former, bursts forth into new development. Death and Birth are but the struggle of Life with itself to assume a more glorious and congenial form. And *my* death—how can it be aught else, since I am not a mere show and semblance of life, but bear within me the one original, true, and essential Life? It is impossible to conceive that Nature should annihilate a life which does not proceed from her; the Nature which exists for me, and not I for her.

Yet even my natural life, even this mere outward manifestation to mortal sight of the inward visible Life, she cannot destroy without destroying herself; she who only exists for me, and on account of me, and exists not, if I am not. Even because she destroys me must she animate me anew; it is only my Higher Life, unfolding itself in her, before which my present life can disappear; and what mortals call Death is the visible appearance of this second Life. Did no reasonable being who had once beheld the light of this world die, there would be no ground to look with faith for a new heaven and a new earth; the only possible purpose of Nature, to manifest and maintain reason, would be fulfilled here below, and her circle would be completed. But the very act by which she consigns a free and independent being to death, is her own solemn entrance, intelligible to all reason, into a region beyond this act itself, and beyond the whole sphere of existence which is thereby closed. Death is the ladder by which my spiritual vision rises to a new life and a new nature.

Every one of my fellow-creatures who leaves this earthly brotherhood, and whom my spirit cannot regard as annihilated because he is my brother, draws my thoughts after him beyond the grave; he is still, and to

him belongs a place. While we mourn for him here below —as in the dim realms of unconsciousness there might be mourning when a man bursts from them into the light of this world's sun—above there is rejoicing that a man is born into that world, as we citizens of the earth receive with joy those who are born unto us. When I one day shall follow, it will be but joy for me; sorrow shall remain behind in the sphere I shall have left.

The world on which I now but gazed with wonder passes away from before me and sinks from my sight. With all the fulness of life, order, and increase which I beheld in it, it is yet but the curtain by which a world infinitely more perfect is concealed from me, and the germ from which that other shall develop itself. My faith looks behind this veil, and cherishes and animates this germ. It sees nothing definite, but it expects more than it can conceive here below, more than it will ever be able to conceive in all time.

Thus do I live, thus am I, and thus am I unchangeable, firm, and completed for all eternity—for this is no existence assumed from without,—it is my own, true, essential life and being.

Such is a somewhat lengthy, but, we trust, fairly complete, abstract of one of the most transcendental systems of Philosophy ever worked out by man.

The whole universe is resolved into God; and God into Will. All things in the world—especially we ourselves, and all persons, are as a kind of vesture or sensuous appearance, beneath which lies a reality, 'The Divine Idea of the World.' To the vulgar herd everything is believed to be as it appears; but a very little knowledge is sufficient to teach the philosopher that appearance has not the faintest resemblance to the reality. All appearance is but a mode or manifestation of the One Divine Will. Yet knowledge is but sufficient to tell us how and what things

are *not*. It is Faith, a voluntary resignation of the will, that is requisite to teach us how and what they *are*. We cannot drift away aimlessly; something within us tells us we are not wholly the sport of circumstance. A voice commands us to be up and doing. But at all times, as Carlyle says, 'a man who will *do* faithfully, needs to *believe* firmly.' No man will work who believes he is but a dream, that his fellows are but his own creations. Even though he *knows* they are nothing more, he *believes* they are something else. So does the philosopher at last join issue with the vulgar. But where the vulgar believes things appear to him as they are because he *must*, the philosopher believes because he *will*.

The Pantheism inherent in the 'Vocation of Man' is even more strongly manifest in 'The Way towards The Blessed Life,' or 'The Doctrine of Religion.' Space forbids us to devote more than two or three pages to this work.

It is in the form of Lectures, of which there are eleven; the teaching of all of which more or less reminds us of the Gospel of St. John. Indeed, Fichte himself in his sixth lecture acknowledges how much of what he has written owes its origin in great measure to the influence this Gospel exerted over him. 'I said in one of the first and introductory lectures, that this doctrine, however new and unheard of it may seem to this age, is yet as old as the world; and that, in particular, it is the doctrine of Christianity, as this even to the present day lies before our view in its purest and most excellent record, the Gospel of John; and that this doctrine is there set forth with the very same images and expressions which we here employ.' 'In my lectures of last winter,[1] I have distinctly announced the grounds upon which I regard the Apostle John as the only teacher of true Christianity:—

[1] 'Characteristics of the Present Age.' Lecture vii.

namely, that the Apostle Paul and his party, as the authors of the opposite system of Christianity, remained half Jews, and left unaltered the fundamental error of Judaism as well as of Heathenism which we must afterwards notice. For the present the following may be enough:—It is only with John that the philosopher can deal, for he alone has respect for reason, and appeals to that evidence which alone has weight with the philosopher,—the internal. "If any man will do the will of Him that sent me, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." But this will of God according to John, is that we should truly believe in God, and in Jesus Christ whom He hath sent. The other promulgators of Christianity, however, rely upon the external evidence of miracle, which to us at least proves nothing. Further, of the four Gospels, only that of John contains what we seek and desire—a doctrine of religion; while, on the contrary, the best that the others offer to us, without completion and explanation by John, amounts to nothing more than morality, which to us has but a very subordinate value. As to the assertion that John had the other Evangelists before him, and only designed to supply what they had omitted, we shall not here inquire into it; should that be the case, then, in our opinion, the supplement is the best part of the whole, and John's predecessors had passed over that precisely which was of essential importance.'

In these lectures Fichte gives great prominence to that doctrine so strongly inculcated by the Greek Philosophers:—that the All and the Many are contained in and come from the One.

For the explanation of everything which arises, you are compelled to assume a previous causal being, by virtue of which the other first arose. If you hold that at some earlier period this second being has itself arisen in its turn, then you are again compelled to assume a third being by virtue of which the second arose—and so on, for ever. But,

in all cases, you must at last arrive at a Being that has not thus *arisen*, and which therefore requires no other thing to account for its being, but which *is* absolutely through itself, by itself, and from itself. But if Being has come from itself and is contained in itself, it must necessarily be conceived of as One, not Many. It must be self-comprehensible, self-sufficient, an absolutely unchangeable Unity. But if this Being is wholly concealed, shut up, comprehended within itself, how is it possible to have any cognisance of it?

Fichte's answer is that we cannot possibly know Being (*Seyn*) save by its manifestation or revelation, which is only shown through Ex-istence (*Daseyn*). The consciousness of Being is the *only possible* form and mode of the Ex-istence (*Daseyn*) of Being; and, consequently, is itself immediately and absolutely this Ex-istence of Being. That any living Ex-istence should be wholly cut off from God is absolutely impossible; for only through the Ex-istence of God in it is it maintained in Ex-istence, and were it possible that God should disappear from within it, then would it thereby itself disappear from Ex-istence. In the lower grades of spiritual life, this Divine Ex-istence is seen only through obscure coverings, and amid confused phantasmagoria, which have their origin in the organs of spiritual sense through which man looks upon himself and upon Being; but to gaze upon it bright and unveiled, as indeed the Divine Life and Ex-istence, and to bathe our whole being in this Life with full enjoyment and love—this is the true and unspeakably Blessed Life.

Being (*Seyn*) is One and not Manifold, and as it is at once complete in itself, without variation or change, and thus an essential or absolute Unity, so also is Ex-istence (*Daseyn*) or Consciousness—since it only exists through Being, and only the Ex-istence of Being—likewise an absolute, eternal, invariable, and unchanging Unity. There is nothing whatever in Ex-istence but immediate and living

Thought. Thought, and the real Life of this Thought, which at bottom is the Divine Life, are molten together into one inward organic Unity; like as, outwardly, they are one, simple, identical, eternal, unchangeable Unity. Nevertheless, opposed to the latter outward Unity, there arises in Thought the *Appearance* of a Manifold, partly because there are many thinking subjects, and partly on account of the infinite series of objects upon which the thought of these subjects must eternally proceed. This Appearance arises even before Pure Thought and the Blessed Life in it, and Thought itself cannot forbid the presence of this Appearance; but in no way does pure Thought believe in this Appearance, nor love it, nor attempt to find enjoyment in it. On the other hand, the lower life, in all its inferior grades, believes in every appearance of this Manifold and in the Manifold itself; runs forth in vagrant dissipation upon this Manifold, and seeks in it for peace and enjoyment of itself which nevertheless it will never find in that way. To the outward eye, these two opposite modes of Life are very similar to each other; both proceed upon the same common objects, which are perceived by both in the same way; inwardly, however, they are very different. The True Life does not even believe in the reality of this Manifold and Changeable; it believes only in its Unchangeable and Eternal Original, in the Divine Essence; with all its thought, its love, its obedience, its self-enjoyment, for ever lost in and blended with that Original:—the Apparent Life, on the contrary, neither knows nor comprehends any Unity whatsoever, but even regards the Manifold and Perishable as the True Being, and is satisfied with it as such.

Whence, then, arises this delusive Appearance? Why does the Manifold make itself felt? Whence—since Being in itself must be absolutely One, without change or variation, and is evident to Thought as such—whence arises the mutability and change which is nevertheless encountered

by actual Consciousness? Being, in itself, is indeed One, the One Divine Being; and this alone is the true Reality in all Ex-istence, and so remains in all Eternity. By reflexion, which in actual Consciousness is indissolubly united with Being, this One Being is broken up into an infinite variety of forms. This separation is absolutely original, and in actual Consciousness can never be abolished nor superseded by anything else; and therefore the visible forms which by this separation are imposed upon absolute Reality are discernible only in actual Consciousness, so that in the act of observing them we assign to them life and endurance; and they are by no means discoverable *à priori* to pure Thought. They are simple and absolute Experience, which is nothing but Experience; which no speculation that understands itself will even attempt or desire to lay hold of; and, indeed, the substance of this Experience, with respect to each particular thing, is that which absolutely belongs to it alone and is its individual characteristic—that which in the whole infinite course of Time can never be repeated, and which can never before have occurred.

Blessedness consists in Union with God, as the One and Absolute. But even in our union with Him He does not become our own Being; but He floats before us as something foreign to ourselves, something present there before us, to which we can only devote ourselves, clinging to Him with earnest love. He floats before us, as in Himself without form or substance, without definite conception or knowledge on our part of his inward essential nature, but only as that through which alone we can think or comprehend either ourselves or the World. Neither after our union with God is the World lost to us; it only assumes a new significance; and instead of an independent existence such as it seemed to us before, it becomes only the Appearance and Manifestation, in knowledge of the Divine Life that lies hidden within itself. The revelation

of God may be compared to Light. Nay, it *is* Light, inward and spiritual Light. This Light, left to itself, separates and divides itself into an infinite multiplicity of individual rays; and in this way, in these individual rays, becomes estranged from itself and its original source. But this same Light may also again concentrate itself from out this separation, and conceive and comprehend itself as One, as that which is in itself—the Ex-istence and Revelation of God; remaining, indeed, even in this conception, that which it is in its form—Light; but yet, even in this conception, announcing itself as having no real Being in itself, but only as the Ex-istence and self-manifestation of God.

Although it may be it is God Himself who lives behind every variety of form, yet we see Him not, but only His garment; we see Him as stone, plant, animal; or if we soar higher, as Natural Law, or as Moral Law: but all this is not yet He. The form for ever veils the substance from us; our vision itself conceals its object; our eye stands in its own light. 'I say unto thee who thus complainest:—Raise thyself to the stand-point of Religion, and all these veils are drawn aside; the World, with its dead principle, disappears from before thee, and the God-head once more enters and resumes its place within thee, in its first and original form as Life — as thine own Life, which thou oughtest to live, and shalt live. Still the one, irreversible form of Reflexion remains—the Infinitude, in thee, of this Divine Life, which in God Himself, is but One; but this form troubles thee not, for thou desirest it and lovest it; it does not mislead thee, for thou art able to explain it. In that which the Holy Man does, lives, and loves, God appears, no longer surrounded by shadows nor hidden by a garment, but in his now immediate and efficient Life; and the question which is unanswerable from the mere empty and unsubstantial conception of God—What is God?—is here answered:—He *is* that which he who is

devoted to Him and inspired by Him *does*. Wouldst thou behold God face to face, as He is in Himself? Seek Him not beyond the skies; thou canst find Him wherever thou art. Behold the life of His devoted ones, and thou beholdest Him; resign thyself to Him, and thou wilt find Him within thine own breast.'[1]

Such is a very brief abstract of the Doctrine of Religion.

It is difficult to comprehend how the writer of two such works as those of which we have endeavoured to give an outline should have met with the accusation of atheism. Not so difficult is it, in our opinion, to understand the accusation of mysticism. At first sight the doctrine that makes Nature and all that is comprehended in that term, an apparition of the human mind, certainly *looks* very much like mysticism. Yet Fichte not only himself very indignantly repudiated the title of mystic; but a great living writer, one who not only seems to have admired but in a certain measure comprehended the philosopher, owns that he too fails to see the justice of the accusation.

'That colossal, adamantine spirit standing erect and clear, like a Cato Major among the degenerate men; fit to have been the teacher of the Stoa, and to have discoursed of beauty and virtue in the groves of Academe! So robust an intellect, a soul so calm, so lofty, massive and immovable, has not mingled in philosophical discussion since the time of Luther. We figure his motionless look, had he heard this charge of mysticism! For the man rises before us amid contradiction and debate like a granite mountain amid clouds and winds. Ridicule of the best that could be commanded had been already tried against him; but it could not avail. What was the wit of a thousand wits to him? The cry of a thousand choughs assaulting that old cliff of granite; seen from the summit, these, as they

[1] The 'Doctrine of Religion,' translated by Dr. W. Smith, in 'Fichte's Works,' pp. 459, 460.

winged the midway air, showed gross as beetles, and their cry was seldom even audible. Fichte's opinions may be true or false; but his character as a thinker can only be slightly valued by those who know it ill; and as a man approved by action and sufferings, in his life and in his death, he ranks with a class of men who were common only in better ages than ours.'[1]

[1] Carlyle.

CHAPTER XI.

HEGEL.

GEORGE WILHELM FRIEDRICH HEGEL was born at Stutgard on August 27, 1770. In his eighteenth year he entered the University of Tübingen as a theological student. Here he attracted no particular attention. It was the youthful Schelling—five years younger than himself—who outshone him as well as all other contemporaries. During the earlier part of his manhood, Hegel cannot be considered a fortunate man. For six years he was a humble house-tutor; for an equal period a sub-professor, and an almost unknown adherent of Schelling's philosophy; for two years, being totally without other means of subsistence, he contented himself with being the editor of a mere local and inconsiderable journal; and afterwards, when even this employment came to its termination, he was, for the next eight years of his life, a poor schoolmaster at Nürnberg. It was not until he had completed the forty-eighth year of his age that obscurity began to lift itself off from him. In 1816 he was called to the chair of Heidelberg, and published in 1817 his *Encyclopädie der philosophischen Wissenchaften* which contains an outline of his system. This work so exalted his reputation that 1818 he was called to the chair of Berlin, then the most important in Germany. He only lived to enjoy this position thirteen years. In 1831 he was seized with cholera, and, after a short illness, expired on November 24 being in the sixty-second year of his age.

Hegel started, though five years his senior, as a disciple of Schelling; and we must therefore devote some little space here to a slight account of Schelling's philosophy, notwithstanding that our next chapter will be entirely occupied with it.

Schelling's starting-point was Fichte, to whom in his earliest writings he openly adhered. His pantheism is seen in his *Philosophy of Nature*, and the *World Soul*. There is one absolute in Nature as in mind. 'Nature was the visible soul, soul the invisible nature. And here, then, in the absolute identity of soul within us and nature *without* us, must lie the resolution of the problem as to the possibility of an external nature.' There is an immanent soul of the universe displaying itself from the lowest to the highest forms of Nature. Every plant is a corporealized throb of the soul. Even in inorganic nature this soul displays itself. What in inorganic nature is the cause of magnetism, causes in organic nature sensibility, and this latter is but a higher potence of the former. The identity of an ultimate cause must be assumed, by which, as by a common soul (world-soul) universal nature, organic and inorganic, is animated: a single principle which, fluctuating between organic and inorganic nature, and preserving the continuity of both, constitutes the first cause of all alteration in the one, and the ultimate ground of all activity in the other.

Thus at this point in his philosophy, Schelling, though starting from Fichte's stand-point, has already begun to differ from him. Fichte said that the Non-Ego was created by the Ego. Schelling said that the two were equally real, but that both were identified in the Absolute.

Transcendental philosophy is (according to Schelling) nature-philosophy turned inward. The entire series, which presents itself in all objects from the highest to the lowest, repeats itself as a successive development in the preceding subject. The absolute is God. He is the All in all; the

eternal source of all existence. He realises Himself under one form as an objectivity; under another form as subjectivity.

Hegel started as an ardent admirer of Schelling. But he perceived (what was undoubtedly the case) that his ideas were ill expressed and wanted arrangement and systematic co-ordination. Hegel was determined therefore to systematize his friend's ideas; to add practical demonstrations to what he believed to be veritable inspirations of truth. Nevertheless, as time passed on Hegel found himself forced to deviate from Schelling, as Schelling, in his turn, had deviated from Fichte. Schelling had substituted objective for subjective idealism. Hegel supersedes both by an absolute idealism, that is again to subordinate the natural to the intellectual element, but equally at the same time to embrace both as inwardly one and identical.

Mr. Lewes has aptly described the difference between the three philosophies of Fichte, Hegel, and Schelling by the following illustration:—

'I see a tree. Certain psychologists tell me that there are three things implied in this one fact of vision, viz., a tree, an image of that tree, and a mind which apprehends that image. Fichte tells me that it is I alone who exist; the tree and the image of the tree are but one thing, and that is a modification of my mind. This is *Subjective Idealism.* Schelling tells me that both the tree and my Ego are existences equally real or ideal, but they are nothing less than manifestations of the Absolute. This is *Objective Idealism.* But, according to Hegel, all these explanations are false. The only thing really existing (in this one fact of vision) is the idea—the *relation.* The Ego and the tree are but two terms of the relation, and once their reality to it. This is *Absolute Idealism.*'

It was this belief in the reality of relations that made Hegel maintain the somewhat startling paradox of the identity of contradictions. 'Being and non-being are the

same' is the first proposition in his logic. Pure being is an abstraction; non-being is an abstraction; unite them, and you have the *Becoming* (*Werden*). In such a doctrine we find the echo of the old Greek philosophy: all is, and is not; we never pass through the same street; we never bathe in the same stream; for all things are in a state of continued flux; they are *becoming* something other than they are.

Hegel, for the most part, repudiated the doctrine of Pantheism. Pantheists, he declared, make Nature one with God, and God one with Nature. In truth, Nature should be represented as the mere exteriority (*Aeusserlichkeit*) of God, it is the passage of the *Idee* or Absolute through imperfection. So far from being a pantheist, Hegel aspired to be regarded as a most orthodox Christian; and in concord with this aspiration, accepted to the full the doctrine of the Trinity. God the Father is the eternal *Idee* as an *unconditioned* Abstraction; God the Son, *engendered* by the Father, is the *Idee* as a *conditioned* Reality; God the Holy Ghost is the identity of the two, the *negation of the negation* and perfect totality of existence. Hegel expressly combats the doctrine of Pantheism by the following illustration:—

'The ancients have made the simple reflexion that the proposition, From something comes something, or From nothing comes nothing, just in effect annihilates a Becoming; for that from which there comes, and that which comes, are one and the same thing; what we have before us is only the proposition of the abstract identity of the Understanding. It must, however, strike us as surprising to see the propositions, From nothing comes nothing, or From something comes something, even in our days quite unsuspectingly maintained, without consciousness that they are the ground-principle of Pantheism, as without any knowledge of the fact that the ancients have exhausted the consideration of these propositions.'

Hegel declares that so far from any denial of creation,

he believes that God is always creating. 'Creation is not an act done long ago, once and for ever, as is the belief of the vulgar; but an eternal moment, a thing always doing. Creation was, is, and ever will be. Creation is the reality of God: it is God passing into activity, but neither suspended nor exhausted in the act.

Nevertheless, in spite of this repudiation of Pantheism, in reality we believe we are right when we pronounce Hegel's philosophy (robbed of its peculiarly obscure phraseology) to be identical with that form of Pantheism as represented throughout this sketch, viz. a belief in God as the One Universal Existence of which Nature is the substantial manifestation; and he himself concludes his Encyclopædia with some verses from a Persian poet, which express, certainly, the leading idea of his philosophy; but not less certainly the leading idea in Pantheism as we have depicted it:—

I looked above, and in all spaces saw but One;
I looked below, and in all billows saw but One;

I looked into its heart, it was a sea of worlds;
A space of dreams all full, and in the dreams but One.

Earth, air and fire and water in Thy fear dissolve;
Ere they ascend to Thee, they trembling blend in One.

All life in heaven and earth, all pulsing hearts should throb
In prayer, lest they impede the One.

Nought but a sparkle of Thy glory is the sun;
And yet Thy light and mine both centre in the One.

Though at Thy feet the circling heaven is only dust,
Yet is it One, and One my being is with Him.

The heavens shall dust become, and dust be heaven again,
Yet shall the One remain, and one my life with Him.[1]

[1] Quoted by the Rev. John Hunt in his 'Essay on Pantheism.' There is so much similarity between Mr. Hunt's treatment of his subject and my own, that lest I might be accused of any act of plagiarism, I take this opportunity of avowing that the first volume of my work was already published, and a great part of the second in manuscript, before I had the pleasure of becoming acquainted with his very interesting essay.

Thus for Hegel, as for those who, unlike himself, are self-acknowledged pantheists, the whole universe is resolved into God. But so little does such a doctrine, in the opinion of Hegel, contradict Christianity, that it is only on this scheme that he is able to perceive that Christianity is, must be, and can only be, the Revealed Religion. It is for this reason that the doctrine of the Trinity seems to him to be of such profound importance. Again and again he may be found animadverting on the gratuitous astonishment of understanding at the identifying of such differences as *one* and *three*.

Indeed, not only the tenets of Christianity, but even its ceremonies Hegel accepts without wavering. Unfortunately his mode of expressing himself is so very difficult of comprehension that we think it better not to devote more than a few pages to him. Enough has been said to show that Hegel may be reckoned among the number of those who believed in God as the One Universal Existence, the Noumenon of every phenomenon.

Of Faith, Hegel declares that it is indispensable in the following manner:—

'The relation of the individual to the truth, is that the individual just comes to this conscious unity, renders himself worthy of it, produces it within himself, becomes filled with the Spirit of God: this takes place through process within him, and this process is, that he has this Faith, for Faith is the truth, the presupposition, that in and for itself and assuredly redemption is accomplished: 'only through this Faith that the redemption is in and for itself and assuredly accomplished, is the individual capable of setting himself into this unity.'

Of Baptism he declares it to be a rite 'that demonstrates that the child is born in the community of the Church, not in outer wretchedness; that it will not have to meet a world at enmity with it, but that its world is the Church.'

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper he characterises thus:—In it there is given to man the consciousness of his reconciliation with God, the entering and dwelling of the Spirit within him. The Lord's Supper is the focal centre of the Christian Church, and from it all differences in the Christian Church receive their colour and form. In regard to it there are three conceptions: (1) According to one of these, the Host, this external, this sensuous, unspiritual thing, becomes through consecration the present God—God as a thing, in the wise of an empirical thing, is just so empirically enjoyed by man. Inasmuch as God was thus known as an outward in the Lord's Supper, this centre and focus of the entire doctrine—this externality, is the fundamental basis of the whole Catholic Religion. There arises thus servility of thought and deed; this externality pervades all further forms of it, the True being represented as what is Fixed, Eternal. As thus existent without the subject, it may come into the power of others; the Church is in possession of this, as of all other means of grace; in every respect, the subject is passive, receptive, knows not what is true, right, and good, but has only to receive it from others. (2) The Lutheran conception is, that the movement begins with an External, that there is an ordinary common thing, but that the Spirit, the self-feeling of the presence of God realises itself, insomuch and in so far as the externality is absorbed, not merely bodily, but in Spirit and Belief. In the Spirit and Belief now is the present God. What is sensuously present is of itself nothing, and even consecration makes not of the Host an object of veneration, but the object is in the Belief alone, and so in the consumption and destruction of the Sensuous element, there is the union with God, and the consciousness of this union of the subject with God. Hence has the grand consciousnesss arisen, that apart from the Enjoyment and Belief, the Host is a common sensuous thing; the process is only in the spirit of the subject truly—certainly a trans-

substantiation, but such that by it the external element is eliminated, God's presence is directly a spiritual one, so that the Faith of the subject belongs to it. (3) The idea here is that the present God is only so in conception, in remembrance, and thus has only an immediate, subjective presence. This is the Reformed idea, an unspiritual, only lively remembrance of the past, no Divine presence, no actual spirituality. Here the Divine element, the Truth, is debased to the Prosa of the Aufbilärung and mere Understanding, a merely moral relation.

All that is, the whole Majesty of the Universe, is, in the opinion of Hegel, but an outward form of the Absolute, or Notion, or the Idea, as it is variously called. The Notion then is the real substantiality of the Universe. As Mr. Stirling expresses it:[1]

'Once for all, the triad, Being, Non-Being, Becoming, is the tortoise of the universe, and the elephant of the same may rest secure on it; that triad is the abstractest form, and so the most rudimentary form of the living concrete Notion, which is the soul and centre of the All. Thought is, and we can go no further back than to, we can begin no sooner than with, its own absolutely indefinite identity, which is pure Being. But thought that *apprehends* itself as Being, *judges* itself Nothing and *reasons* itself into Becoming.'

Not very comprehensible language this; but through all the obscurity we can trace the prevailing doctrine of the One being the source and origin of the All.

We will content ourselves with one more passage from Hegel, and then bring this chapter to its close.

'In philosophic consideration, the Notion is also the beginning, but it is the Thing, the Substance, as the germ from which the whole tree develops itself. In it are all the determinative characters contained, the whole nature of the tree, the peculiarity of its sap, ramification, but not

[1] 'The Secret of Hegel,' by J. H. Stirling, vol. ii., p. 49.

'pre-formed in such wise that, if we take a microscope, we shall see the branches, leaves, in miniature; not so, but on the contrary, in spiritual wise. So the Notion contains the whole nature of the object, and knowledge here is nothing but the development of the Notion, of that which is contained *impliciter* in the Notion, not yet come into existence, explicated, laid out. Thus it is we begin with the Notion of Religion.

'The second, then, is religion in its determinateness, the determinate Notion. This we take not from without, but it is the free Notion itself that propels itself into its determinateness. It is not as if we empirically treated Right, for example, in which case Right is, first of all, defined in general; but then the determinate (particular) Rights (the Roman, German, &c.) are to be taken from elsewhere, from experience; here (that is, with us) the determinateness has to yield itself from the Notion itself.

'The determinate Notion of Religion is finite religion, a one-sided something, thus and thus constituted as against other, one particular as against another particular; Religion in its finitude.

'The third is the Notion that comes to its own self out of its determinateness, finitude that again restores itself out of this finitude, limitation; and this restored Notion is the infinite, veritable, Notion, the Absolute Idea, the true Religion.

'The first religion in the Notion is not yet the true religion. The Notion is true certainly within itself, but it belongs to truth that the Notion should also realise itself, as it belongs to the soul that it should have given itself a body. This realisation is directly determinative of the Notion; the absolute realisation is that this determination is adequate to the Notion; this adequate Notion is the idea, the veritable Notion. These, in an abstract way, are the three parts in general.'

CHAPTER XII.

SCHELLING.

FIVE years after the birth of Hegel, viz., on January 27, 1775, was born at Leonburg in Wurtemburg, Frederick William Joseph Schelling. Our notice of his life must necessarily be somewhat brief. The happiest individuals, as the happiest nations, have no history. The early life of Schelling appears to have been that of a calm student well contented with the even tenour of his lot; and he does not seem to have been subjected to the bitter trials of poverty experienced to such a deep extent by Fichte and only in a lesser degree by Hegel.

He was the son of a well-to-do country clergyman, and in his early youth displayed such unusual precocity that before he was fifteen his father determined to send him for the completion of his education to the University of Tübingen where he became acquainted with Hegel,—an acquaintance that afterwards developed into ardent esteem and friendship on both sides. He subsequently removed to Leipzig, where he studied medicine and philosophy, in which latter branch of his education he had the advantage of serving as a pupil under Fichte. And in these philosophical studies he showed himself such an adept that he was shortly selected to fill Fichte's vacant chair at Jena, where he lectured with immense success.

He was still under thirty years of age when he was summoned from Jena by the Bavarian Government to the newly founded University of Würzburg, where he soon

took a prominent part, and, as at Jena, gathered around him a numerous auditory. In this position he remained till 1806, when the political changes then occurring in Bavaria drove him to Munich. In 1807 he was made a member of the Munich Academy of Sciences, and about the same time he was also appointed Secretary-General to the then recently founded Academy of Arts.

These new duties brought a long interruption to his activity as a public teacher. His position being almost that of an official, it was natural the Government should appeal to him whenever it required advice or assistance in the management of artistic or scientific matters. The pecuniary remuneration he received for these duties was of such a character as to render it totally unnecessary for him to resort to literature as a means of subsistence. The only drawback to his worldly prosperity lay in the fact that the raw climate of Munich affected him unfavourably, so that he was frequently compelled to visit Stuttgart and other places in order to recruit his health.

In 1821 he removed to Erlangen, where he remained some five or six years in order to enjoy undisturbed leisure for his studies; and he delivered during this somewhat lengthy sojourn a very successful series of lectures. Indeed, wherever he went, success seemed to follow in his footsteps, and he was regarded as one of the most brilliant instructors that the German Universities had ever produced. In 1827 King Lewis of Bavaria summoned him back to Munich, where he became Conservator-General of the scientific collections of the kingdom; and he taught also in the newly established University. He was treated with much distinction and was in confidential relations with the Crown Prince, afterwards Maximilian II., who was his pupil. Among his special admirers was Frederick William IV. of Prussia, who abhorred Hegel's system as a rationalist pantheistic philosophy; and hoped by means of Schelling to be able to suppress the school. When Crown

Prince he had endeavoured to induce Schelling to take up his dwelling in Berlin; but it was not till 1841, and after the prince had ascended the throne, that the philosopher yielded to the sovereign's request. In 1842, in the chair once held by Hegel, Schelling opened a series of lectures. He was received with the eager welcome generally awarded to those who have been long expected; and amongst the brilliant audience that assembled to listen to him, found not only admiring students but professors and other eminent personages.

He was twice married; and his correspondence with his second wife is given at some length in the second volume of his published 'Life and Letters.'[1] Her name was Pauline Gotter. She was a highly accomplished woman and a personal friend of Goethe. From the beginning of their acquaintance Schelling conceived a great admiration for her, and after the death of his first wife, made an offer of marriage to her, which was accepted. In all his domestic relations, Fortune seems to have favoured him as much as she did throughout his public career.

While on a journey to Pfeffers in Switzerland in the summer of 1854, he was seized with a sudden illness; and on August 20, at Ragatz, in the Canton of St. Gall, passed peacefully away in the eightieth year of his age. Maximilian II. of Bavaria has erected a monument to him at the place where he died.

We have incidentally touched upon the philosophy of Schelling, in our account of that of his immediate predecessor (or rather contemporary) Hegel. This, coupled with the fact that we are almost afraid our readers must already have wearied of the very difficult, (indeed, to our minds, at times, incomprehensible) method and style of Transcendentalism, induces us to render our account of the philosophy of Schelling somewhat brief. Enough has

[1] *Aus Schelling's Leben in Briefen.*

been said to show that the philosophy of the Transcendentalists was growing very like that of the Alexandrian Neo-Platonists related in the First Volume of this work. And with Schelling a likeness that with his two predecessors had been somewhat striking, increases to so very marked an extent as almost to resemble identity. Plotinus, after relinquishing in despair the method of poor human reason, has recourse to faith. *Ecstasy* is the only means through which the finite can attain or comprehend the Infinite. Schelling does likewise. He too has recourse to Faith; but instead of calling this supposed comprehension of the Infinite, *Ecstasy*, he calls it *Intuition*; a distinction which we venture to think is more verbal than real.

Schelling began his philosophical career as an acknowledged disciple of Fichte. With Fichte the reality of the object had disappeared. His idealism was purely subjective idealism. The *Non-Ego* was but the production of the *Ego*. The whole external world was but the subjective conception of the thinking mind. For a time Schelling agreed with his master in this intensely transcendental idealism. Yet the reality of the objective world forced itself upon his consideration with a persistency that compelled him at times to doubt whether this doctrine of subjectivity was a sufficient interpretation of the mystery. Surely this world and all that it contains is something more real than the spots before the eyes or noises in the ears that affect us when we are out of health. True, if he shut his eyes, or were paralysed and incapable of touch, an object to him would possess no external reality; but, on the other hand, all the senses in the world would not yield him the appearance of an object if the object were not really within view. If the subject possessed certain properties, surely the object equally possessed certain qualities. The Ego and the Non-Ego must be equally real. Fichte must have erred in conceiving that the object was purely the creation of the perceiving subject. They both

had an equal existence, not indeed a separate or independent existence; but they were identified in some higher substance. Nature is Spirit visible; Spirit is invisible Nature; and the union of this Real and this Ideal is but a form of the Absolute.

Thus we perceive that by the time he has arrived at this point of his philosophy Schelling has separated himself from Fichte; and for a time takes refuge under the leadership of Spinoza. But this Spinozism soon grew into a sort of Neo-Platonism. 'There dwells in us all, he says at one place, 'a secret, wonderful faculty, by virtue of which we can withdraw from the mutations of time into our innermost disrobed selves, and there behold the eternal under the form of immutability; such vision is our innermost and peculiar experience, on which alone depends all that we know and believe of a supra-sensible world.'

This faculty is what Schelling terms 'Intellectual Intuition,' a faculty which it might have been more appropriate, had it been termed 'Abstraction;' but by whatever name it was called, the reader will readily perceive that this *intuition* or withdrawal into our innermost selves was almost identical with the *ecstasy* of Plotinus.

Schelling, for the most part, repudiated the imputation of Pantheism. Nevertheless, there are in almost all his writings, passages of pantheistic tendency. Take this, for instance:—

Man can look at the world and say:—'I am the God whom it cherishes in its bosom, the mind that moves in all things. From the first struggling of unseen forces to the outpouring of the first living juices of vegetation, when force grows into force, and matter into matter, and the first buds and blossoms swell—and to the first ray of newborn light, which breaks through night like a second creation, and from the thousand eyes of the world, by day as by night, illuminates the heavens, there is One force, One

changing play, and One interweaving of forces, One heat, One impulse towards ever higher life.'

Schelling believes that nothing exists out of the Absolute Reason, but that all things are contained in it; and adds that this Absolute Reason must be conceived as the total indifference of the subjective and the objective. Reason is the true *per se*; to know things as they are in themselves, is to know them as they are in the Reason. The difference which Schelling apprehends (hypothetically, and with the hope of subsequent agreement) as subsisting between his stand-point and that of Fichte, is indicated by him in the formulæ: Ego=All; All=Ego; on the former is founded the subjective idealism of Fichte; on the latter his own objective idealism, which he also terms the system of absolute identity.

In common with the Neo-Platonists, the philosophy of Schelling is strongly pervaded with trinitarian ideas. Philosophy becomes objective in three positive sciences, which represent the three intrinsic aspects of the subject of philosophy. The first of these sciences is Theology, which as the science of the absolute and divine essence, presents objectively the point of absolute indifference between the ideal and the real. The ideal side of philosophy, separately objectified, is the science of History; or, in so far as the most eminent work of history is the development of law, the science of Law or Jurisprudence. The real side of Philosophy, taken by itself, is outwardly represented by the science of Nature, and in so far as this science concentrates itself in that of organic life, by Medicine. Only by their historical element can the positive or real sciences be separated from absolute science or philosophy. Since theology, as the true centre in which philosophy becomes objective, is pre-eminently contained in speculative ideas, it is the highest synthesis of philosophical and historical knowledge. If the Ideal is a higher potency of the Real,

it follows that the faculty of Law should precede that of Medicine.'

In the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, Schelling finds the following meaning, viz.: that the eternal Son of God, born of the essence of the Father of all things, is the Finite itself, as it exists in the eternal intuition of God; and that this Finite appears phenomenally as a suffering God, a God subject to the fatalities of time, and who, in the culmination of his manifestation in Christ, brings to an end the world of finiteness and opens that of infinity or of the supremacy of spirit. The incarnation of God is an incarnation from eternity. Christianity, as an historical phenomenon, issued, as to its particular origin, from a single religious association existing among the Jews. Its more universal root is to be sought in the nature of the Oriental mind, which in the Hindoo religion created the intellectual system and the earliest Idealism, and which, after flowing through the entire Orient, found in Christianity its permanent bed; from it was distinguished in earlier times that other current, which in Hellenic religion and art gave birth to the highest beauty, in which yet, even on the soil of Hellenism, mystical elements were found, and a philosophy—the Platonic pre-eminently—opposed to the popular religion and prophetic of Christianity. The spread of Christianity is explained by the unhappy character of the times, which rendered men susceptible to the influences of a religion that pointed them back to the ideal, teaching self-denial and making of it a pleasure. The development of the idea of Christianity is in its whole history, and in the new world created by it.

In his remarks on the study of History and Nature, Schelling's leading idea is, that the former expresses in the ideal what the latter expresses in the real. Nature is the real side of the eternal act by which the subjective is made objective. The being of everything in the Identity of Subject and Object, or in the Universal Soul, and the

striving of everything which has been separated from it, and which has so lost its own unity, to become re-united with it—these constitute the general ground of vital phenomena.

Obscure as are the above passages from the works of Schelling, as he advanced in life this obscurity so greatly increased upon him as to make his writings (at all events, to the mind of the present writer) almost incomprehensible. He became the disciple of one Jacob Boehme, an acknowledged mystic and theosopher. Trinitarian ideas increase upon him. He distinguishes or divides God into what he calls three *momenta*:—(1) Indifference, the primordial basis or the 'abyss' of the divine nature; (2) Differentiation into ground (or cause) of existence; (3) Identity or conciliation of the differentiated. The first *momentum*, in which no personality is yet present, is only the beginning of the divine nature; it is that in God which is not God Himself; it is the incomprehensible basis of reality. In it the imperfection and evil which pertain to finite things have their ground. All natural beings have a bare existence in the 'ground' of the divine nature, or in an original yearning not yet harmonised and made one with the understanding, and are therefore in relation to God merely peripheric beings. Man only is in God, and by virtue of this immanence in God, he alone is capable of freedom. Unity of the particular will with the universal will is Goodness; separation of the particular will from the universal will is Evil. Man is a central being and must therefore remain in the centre. In him all things are created, just as it is only through man that God adopts nature and unites it with Himself. Nature is the first or Old Testament, since in it things are still away from their centre, and are therefore under the law. Man is the beginning of the New Covenant, the redeemer of nature, through whose mediation—since he himself is united with God—God, after the final separation, receives nature and makes it a part of Himself.

Schelling repels the charge that his philosophy contains

within it anything naturalistic or atheistic. He says that God is for him both Alpha and Omega, first and last; the former as *Deus implicitus*, God *involved*, or impersonal indifference; the latter as *Deus explicitus*, God *evolved*, or God as personality, as subject of existence. A theism not recognising the 'ground' or nature in God, argues Schelling, is impotent and vain.

As he increased in years Schelling became very bitter against the Hegelians. He speaks of Hegel's system as a mere episode in German philosophy, which must be entirely put aside before the right path can be regained. It was Schelling's habit, unfortunately, to condemn harshly, sometimes indeed passionately, everything that did not please him. He had been so exceptionally successful in his own philosophical career that he had grown to regard himself as supreme in the domain of intellect; and demanded recognition not as a constitutional king, but as an autocrat. He regarded his own system as very superior to any that had appeared before; he characterised it as peculiarly the system of Freedom, a system that was in direct opposition to the purely rationalist philosophy of his predecessors, according to which everything develops from the necessity of thought; and he declared he never sought to limit intellectual development, but always upheld the fullest freedom of inquiry.

During the latter part of his life it was manifest to him his philosophy was not so eagerly welcomed as in the earlier part of his career. Two reasons may be equally assigned for this. In the first place, there is no doubt that Schelling himself had greatly retrograded as he advanced to old age. The aged mystic Schelling was manifestly inferior to the young philosopher Schelling who had written 'Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature' or the 'World Soul;' and who could rise to the sublime conception of an all-pervading spirit which 'sleeps in the stone, dreams in the animal, and wakes in the man.' But another reason

for the neglect of his teaching lay in the fact that as the nineteenth century advanced to maturity German interest in speculative philosophy was greatly decreasing. Questions of current politics alone excited universal sympathy; the course of things since 1848 had pushed all deeper researches into the background. But from politics and all subjects akin to politic Schelling had always held aloof. Nature, Art, and Religion were the three great subjects which occupied his mind; and as his earlier philosophy was essentially directed to Nature, so his later studies were devoted to Religion. His teaching demanded an earnestness of thought in which the age was wanting. Or, perhaps, it might be nearer the truth to say that the stern realities of wars and revolutions and bloodshed had taken the place of dreamy abstractions and metaphysical speculation.

CHAPTER XIII.

LEIBNITZ AND SCHOPENHAUER.

WE depart considerably out of chronological order for the sake of bringing Leibnitz, the philosopher of Optimism, and Schopenhauer, the philosopher of Pessimism, into juxtaposition one with the other.

In order of time the philosophy of Leibnitz should have been discussed in a chapter immediately preceding that relating to Berkeley. Yet we think that the advantage gained by bringing him into juxtaposition with Schopenhauer will more than compensate for any little awkwardness arising from failure in chronological order. Neither Berkeley nor the German Transcendentalists can properly be called disciples of Leibnitz; and if we except, perhaps, Lessing, who was a student, and, to some extent, an admirer of Leibnitz, each of the philosophies of which we have yet treated, is as capable of comprehension without a previous acquaintance with the philosophy of Leibnitz, as it would have been with such acquaintance. On the other hand, there is a very real advantage in bringing Leibnitz into juxtaposition with Schopenhauer, because the striking dissimilarity that existed between the two systems, the radical contrast exhibited in all points of their philosophy, save two, one essential, and the other merely collateral, and displaying itself in the deep tenderness they both evinced towards animal life, make that one essential point of similarity very suggestive indeed. The reasonableness of the doctrine of Pantheism cannot fail to be

very marked when it is found as the basis of the doctrine of the gloomy, morose, somewhat unphilosophical Schopenhauer, equally with that of the sunny, bright, and deeply philosophical Leibnitz.

Neither Leibnitz nor Schopenhauer were pantheists to the extent of Bruno or Spinoza: yet both confessed an Unity, both experienced a consciousness of One Reality as the fundamental basis of all phenomena. Schopenhauer finds this Unity in the Will, from which proceed various Ideas, which are merely the objectification of Will. Leibnitz, as Jacobi has told us, was ready to 'strike fire from every pebble,' and it is somewhat difficult to know whether he believed in an immanent or external cause of the universe. Yet, in his 'Monadologie,' he defines knowledge as the representation of multitude in unity; and in the 'Nouveaux Essais' explicitly explains 'that the *Infinite* is not a modification, it is the *Absolute*; on the contrary, so soon as we introduce modifications, we limit ourselves, or form a *finite*.' Leibnitz may be said to come half way between the dualism of Descartes and the pure monism of Spinoza. Monad is the name given by Leibnitz to simple unextended substance, that is, a substance which has the power of action; active force (like to the force of the strained bow), is the essence of substance. These monads must not be confused with the atoms of Democritus, which were merely physical particles, moved in obedience to physical principles, and, being themselves without sensation, produce sensation and thought by particular forms of their combinations. The atoms of Democritus differed from one another in magnitude, figure, and position, but not qualitatively or in internal character; the monads of Leibnitz, on the contrary, are qualitatively differentiated by their ideas. All monads have ideas, but the ideas of the different monads are of different degrees of clearness. God is the primitive monad, the primary substance; all other monads are its fulgurations. God has none but adequate

ideas. Every soul is a monad. Plants and minerals are, as it were, sleeping monads with unconscious ideas. In plants these ideas are formative vital forces; in animals they take the form of sensation and memory; in human souls they disclose themselves in consciousness, reason; in a word they approach, though they do not attain, the clearness of the adequate ideas possessed by God.

Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibnitz was born at Leipzig on July 1, 1646. In 1661 he entered the University of Leipzig, where one of his own relations was its most distinguished Professor. In 1663 he removed to Jena for the completion of his education. We have it on his own authority how early was the age at which his taste for philosophy disclosed itself.

'After I had left the lower school,' he says, 'I fell in with the modern philosophers, and I remember walking alone in a little piece of woods, called the Rosenthal, near Leipzig, at the age of fifteen years, in order to deliberate with myself whether I should adhere to the doctrine of substantial forms. The doctrine of Mechanism won finally the upper hand with me, and conducted me to mathematics. But when I came to seek for the ultimate grounds of mechanism and of the laws of motion, I turned back to Metaphysics, and the theory of Entelechies, and from the material to the formal; and at last I conceived, after having many times revised and farther developed my conceptions, that the monads or simple substances were the only real substances, and that material things were merely phenomena, but phenomena having their good and proper foundation, and connected with each other.' [1]

In 1666 Leibnitz applied at Leipzig for the degree of Doctor of Law; but the title was denied him on account of his youth, as it was not thought right to prefer him before older suitors for the same title. Nothing daunted, he

[1] Quoted by Ueberweg in his 'History of Philosophy,' vol. ii., p. 102.

applied for the honour at Altdorf where the degree was duly bestowed upon him. His early manhood was chiefly passed in travel, a means of education only next, in his opinion, to constant intercourse with scholars and statesmen. In the year 1676, while in Paris, he received from the Duke of Brunswick and Hanover an appointment as librarian at Hanover, and was commissioned also to write the history of the family of the reigning prince. Subsequently he was charged with the superintendence of the Wolfenbüttel Library. He was more or less on friendly and intimate terms with the whole of the Hanoverian royal family; but especially so with the Princess Sophie Charlotte, who revered in Leibnitz her teacher, and who entered with the deepest sympathy into his philosophico-theological speculations, even after her marriage with Frederick I. of Prussia. Supported by her influence, Leibnitz induced the latter to found the Society of Sciences at Berlin, which afterwards grew into the Academy of Sciences. He also sought, but without immediate result, to found Academies at Dresden and Vienna. In the year 1711 Leibnitz met Peter the Great of Russia, who learnt to esteem him so highly that he appointed him a privy councillor of justice, and called upon him for advice concerning the best means for promoting the advancement of science and civilisation in Russia. Leibnitz suggested to him the idea of founding an Academy of Sciences at St. Petersburg; which idea, though warmly approved of by Peter the Great, was not fully carried out till after that sovereign's death. Honours rapidly gathered around Leibnitz. From his youth upwards he seemed to be one of Fortune's favourites. He was endowed with a marvellous bodily constitution; he was possessed of an almost encyclopædic power of acquiring knowledge; capable of great literary fatigue, and with a keen relish for all the higher and better enjoyments of life. The world seemed inclined to be as bountiful to him in her objective gifts as Nature in her subjective. In 1712 he was

appointed an Imperial Councillor, having still earlier been elevated to the ranks of the nobility. He is also said to have received the dignity of a baron of the empire. And although he died at the comparatively early age of fifty years, he had managed to amass by that time such a large fortune that his inheritrix is said to have died from joy at the discovery of her treasure.

Perhaps it was gratitude for so much happiness that made Leibnitz draw the deduction that the Author of such happiness must be beneficent, and that from such a beneficent author nothing but goodness and beneficence could proceed, nothing but happiness be diffused. He seems either consciously or unconsciously to have shut his eyes to the fact that the world contains unmerited evil as well as merited good; undeserved misery as well as deserved happiness; that the guilty prosper when the innocent are punished. He declared this world to be the best of all possible worlds. Among the infinitude of possibilities, God, being good, must have chosen that which is best. 'On voit par là comment la véritable physique doit être puisée effectivement à la source des perfections divines.' Were a better world possible than the one which exists, God's wisdom must have known, His goodness must have willed, and His omnipotence must have created it.[1]

There have not been wanting critics who have sneered

[1] Mr. Mill has, with his usual subtlety, pointed out that Leibnitz never maintained that this world was the best of all *imaginable*, but only of all *possible* worlds. And starting as Leibnitz did with the assumption of God's perfect goodness, it was but a logical inference to draw that God, who is absolute goodness, must have chosen the best world and no other. (See 'Three Essays upon Religion,' p. 40.)

This distinction, which I have never seen noticed by any other writer upon Leibnitz, and which had not made itself apparent to me before reading Mr. Mill's passage referred to, is a very radical one, and quite refutes the common notion that the doctrine of Leibnitz was the shallow unthinking optimism it is sometimes represented to be. Whether, however, this idea of a 'limited Theism' in the least solves the mystery around us, is a question which we have slightly touched upon elsewhere.

at this *à priori* method of Leibnitz, but to us, we confess, though we do not altogether partake of his optimism, he seems a very real philosopher. Of large, broad, catholic views, he is never in extremes. Instead of inviting hostilities he tries to reconcile differences, instead of drawing off in antagonism from systems with which he cannot wholly agree, he endeavours to discover the general principles of truth which he feels sure lie at the basis of all religions and philosophies alike. Dissimulation and hypocrisy are the only qualities for which he has no tolerance; but whatever the absurdities, however foolish may have been the precepts of religious or philosophical founders, provided they were in earnest, there is sure, he believes, to be some lesson worthy for us to learn from them. Truth he held to be more widely diffused and possessed than is generally supposed; the majority of sects are right in a great part of their affirmations, but not in the most of their negations. Teleologists and mechanists are both right in the positive part of their assertions, for although mechanical laws are universal in their spheres of operation, they serve to realise ends.

In the First Volume of this sketch,[1] we pointed out that Bruno might be considered a crude pioneer of the Evolution Theory. Leibnitz was no *crude* pioneer. He was as consistent an evolutionist as Mr. Herbert Spencer himself. He carried the principle throughout the whole variety of his very varied studies. 'Everything goes by steps in Nature,' he says, 'and nothing by leaps; this law of change is a part of my law of continuity (*Nouv. Ess.*, iv., 16.) Between all the principal divisions of beings, between plants and animals there is an insensible gradation, a continuous series of intermediate beings, whereby the *connexion graduelle* of species is secured.'

According to Professor Ueberweg, the fundamental belief in Leibnitz's system is that the theologico-teleological

[1] Vol. i. p. 355.

and physico-mechanical conceptions of the world should not exclude each other, but should in all cases be united. The particular phenomena of nature can and must be mechanically explained, but we should not, at the same time, be unmindful of their designs, which Providence is able to accomplish by the very use of mechanical means; the principles of physics and mechanics themselves depend on the direction of a Supreme Intelligence, and can be only explained when we take into consideration this intelligence. The true principles of physics must be deduced from the Divine perfections; thus must piety be combined with reason.

Leibnitz believes that civil and philosophical history displays a progressive gradation quite as greatly as does natural history. It is possible, he says, to remark a progress in philosophical knowledge. The Orientals had beautiful and sublime ideas of Deity. The Greeks added reasoning, and, in general, the scientific form. The Church Fathers removed the evil which they found in the Greek philosophy, while the Scholastics sought to make the true in it serviceable to Christianity. The philosophy of Descartes is, as it were, the antechamber of the truth; he perceived that in Nature the quantum of Force is constant; had he also known that its aggregate direction remains unchanged, he would necessarily have been led to the system of pre-established harmony. Yet, adds Leibnitz modestly, in reply to a playful question, whether he himself thought to lead man out of the antechamber into the cabinet of Nature, between the antechamber and the cabinet is situated the audience chamber, and it will be sufficient if we obtain audience, without pretending to enter into the interior.

To the doctrine that 'Everything goes by steps in Nature and nothing by leaps,' he added by way of adumbration, 'That order in the causes will be followed by order in the effects, and hence that continuous variations in the

given conditions will be followed by continuous variations in whatever depends on those conditions.' Thus we perceive that so long as two centuries ago Leibnitz had arrived at the same philosophical conclusion that is now accepted by the greater portion of the cultivated world. The doctrine that variation in the causes will produce variation in the effects, that there is a gradual transition between all forms of life, and that Nature does nothing by leaps, is almost identical with the doctrines of which Mr. Darwin and Mr. Herbert Spencer have made themselves such illustrious exponents.

Through this doctrine of progression, by reason of this belief in gradual growth and not in sudden creation, Leibnitz was forced to reject the dualism of Descartes. It is not reasonable, he says, to assume one active principle, the universal spirit, and one passive principle, matter. The scale of beings descends from God, the primitive monad, down to the lowest monad.

Closely connected with the above doctrines is another, concerning the multitude of *insensible perceptions* which dwell in every man, which 'form our tastes, those images of the qualities of the senses, clear in their union, confused in their parts; those impressions which the bodies that surround us make upon us, and which envelope the infinite; that *liaison* which every being has with the rest of the universe. It may even be said that in virtue of those minute perceptions the present is full of the future and charged with the past. *Le présent est gros de l'avenir.* In the smallest substance eyes piercing like the eyes of God might read the whole series of events in the universe. These insensible perceptions further designate and constitute the individual man, who is characterised by the traces which they preserve of his previous states, by the connection which they establish between those states and his present state. They may be known by a superior being, even though the individual in whom they dwell should not

be aware of them; that is to say, if there should be in him no distinct recollection of them. They even give us the means of recovering the memory, when we need it, by periodical developments which may come to us some day. It is for this reason that death can only be a sleep, and cannot be a lasting sleep; the perceptions only ceasing to be clearly distinguished, and being reduced in living creatures into a state of confusion, which suspends the *apperception*, but which cannot continue for ever.'

From the monadic and spiritual nature of the soul, Leibnitz inferred its indestructibility and immortality. From the impossibility of explaining the actual agreement between soul and body by the hypothesis of physical influence, he deduces the necessity of supposing that God exists as the common cause of all finite substances. In the earlier period of his philosophical career, Leibnitz seems to have believed that God was not merely the *author* of the universal harmony, but absolutely *was* the harmony. 'Cette dernière raison des choses est appelée Dieu.' During this period of belief Leibnitz was of course a pantheist quite to the extent of Bruno or Spinoza. But in the later period of his philosophising he taught, without hesitation or wavering, that God, the primitive substance, had so regulated every monad that each constantly reflected from its standpoint the universe, and that God was consequently not the universal harmony Himself, but only the producer of the universal harmony.

'God,' says Leibnitz, in another place, 'is the primitive unity or original simple substance, whose productions are all created or derivative monads, all of which arise from the primitive monad as if by constant radiations. God has an adequate knowledge of all things, since he is the source of all. He is as it were an omnipresent centre; all things are immediately present to him, nothing is far from him. Those monads which are spirits have, beyond the knowledge which belongs to the others, the knowledge of

God, and participate in a measure in God's creative power. God governs nature as its architect, the world of spirits as their monarch; between the kingdoms of nature and grace there subsists a predetermined harmony.'—*Principes de la nature et de la grâce.*

On this principle of the harmony between the kingdoms of nature and grace Leibnitz bases his '*Théodicée*,' or vindication of God in view of the evil of the world:—Physical evil or pain is salutary as punishment or means of tuition. As to moral evil or wrong, God could not remove them without removing the power of self-determination; and, therewith, the possibility of morality itself. The course of nature is so ordered by God as in all cases to accord with the highest interests of the soul; and it is in this that the harmony between the kingdoms of nature and grace subsists.

The *Théodicée* is partly occupied with endeavouring to bring about a reconciliation between Catholicism and Protestantism, Leibnitz perceiving, with large-hearted tolerance, the germ of good laid hidden in both. He also endeavoured, though somewhat unsuccessfully in our opinion, to reconcile revealed religion with the growing knowledge of the day.

His trust in the beneficence of the Author of the 'Universal Harmony' led Leibnitz to include all animals within the pale of immortality. Descartes in his desire to exalt the human soul had treated of animals as if they were mere senseless machines, without consciousness or power of feeling—a doctrine that might easily be perverted into a shield for positive cruelty and inhumanity. Against this tendency the humane Leibnitz revolted. Everywhere he discovered life. One monad differed from another not in kind but only in degree. He could not believe, with Descartes, that the universe consisted of a minority of thinking substances and a large majority of particles which are the subjects for dissection. But it con-

sisted, he believed, of active generative elements, out of which all the innumerable forms of existence are developed; souls being only the most perfect of those elements; possessing in addition to the other properties of life, self-consciousness; capable of conversing with that Monad to whom all the others owe their existence—Him in whom all perfections must be combined, from whom they must be derived. In consistency with this doctrine, Leibnitz could see no ground for denying immortality to animals; the immortality must be a continuance of that kind of life with which each creature is endowed. The immortality of a self-conscious Monad must therefore be essentially different from that of one who wants self-consciousness. An entirely different economy must be needful for the government and education of one and the other. There must be a city of God or kingdom of grace for minds or spirits, and a natural kingdom for the other monads. But the principles of the two must strictly agree, and the universe must altogether be the best that could have been formed; all its seeming discords must really minister to its perfection. Death can never master it or become the dominant principle in it.

Such a doctrine is, of course, mere speculation. Somewhat fanciful speculation in our opinion. Yet in spite of it, it contains a notion not a little beautiful in its very fancifulness. We suppose few believers in human immortality have not at times experienced some consciousness of a desire that the devotion and affection of some of the lower animals mighty be worthy of a longer duration than their brief life of twelve or fourteen years; that the physical ills and miseries they share in common with ourselves might be compensated by future happiness and well-being. Fanciful as are many of the speculations of Leibnitz, there is something touching in his strong confidence and earnest faith in the ultimate good of everything.

To the collection of public acts and treaties, published

by him at Hanover in 1693, and entitled *Codex juris gentium diplomaticus*, Leibnitz prefixed a number of definitions of ethical and juridicial conceptions:—

The controverted question whether there is such a thing as disinterested love, he seeks to answer by the definition of love as delight in the happiness of others, in which definition, on the one hand, the element of personal satisfaction is not lost sight of, and on the other hand, the source of this satisfaction has its origin in the happiness of others. Yet love is a passion that must be guided by reason, in order that justice may grow from it.

Benevolence, Leibnitz defines as the habit of loving or esteeming, arising from frequent exercise of the faculty.

Charity is universal benevolence. Justice is the charity of the wise. The good man is he who loves all men, so far as reason permits; justice is the virtue which controls this love.

Justice, taken in all its varied meanings, namely strict or commutative justice, equity or distributive justice, and piety or probity which is universal justice, Leibnitz endeavoured to reduce to three brief principles of justice which he expressed by the injunction: 'Injure no one, give to each his due, and live honestly.'

The details that have come down of the life of Leibnitz are so scanty that it is impossible to say whether he lived up to the high ideal he had formed. It is of course obvious by the very large fortune he amassed, that he was not possessed of the enthusiastic generosity that characterised Spinoza, yet the fact that so little evil has been retailed of so celebrated a man as Leibnitz is almost sufficient in itself to assure us of the innocence, benevolence, and justice of his life. The eminent and great among us are the targets of small censorious minds; very trifling faults which in lesser men would be passed by, are in the eminent or fortunate gladly exaggerated into errors very glaring indeed; so that when no charge is brought against

one equally great in himself as he was favoured by fortune, the probability of his personal purity and probity becomes very strong indeed.

In his mental capacity it is almost impossible to exaggerate the vast genius of Leibnitz. As we have stated, he fully deserves the title of no merely crude pioneer of Darwin and Spencer, although of course the comparative backwardness of all science prevented him rivalling or even approaching those great philosophers in detail and scientific accuracy. But, besides being so eminent in the regions of philosophy, Leibnitz was a great mathematician and a very successful investigator of science. It was he who propounded the doctrine of the gradual cooling of the globe, the descent of its strata by fracture, the deposit of sedimentary rocks, and their induration. By some it has even been considered that Leibnitz was the rival of Newton.

Newton had in 1665 and 1666 been in possession of the 'Arithmetic of Fluxions' discovered and so named by him, but he did not publish this theory till 1687. It is possible that in some way or other Leibnitz may have heard of the discovery of Newton; but the fact remains that in 1676, and consequently eleven years prior to the publication of Newton's work, Leibnitz had developed his 'Differential Calculus,' which agreed in substance with Newton's 'Calculus of Fluxions.'

Better men no doubt have lived than Leibnitz. Abler men in their one particular study have no doubt out-rivalled him. But we question if he has ever been surpassed and very rarely equalled by any one man in the very great variety of subjects in which he equally excelled.

Turn we now to a slight account of the life and philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer.

If the axiom that a tree shall be known by its fruits be considered to hold as good in Philosophy as elsewhere, then, we imagine, few readers can have gone thus far

through our sketch without having arrived at the conclusion that Philosophy must be a tree sown in singularly rich and fertile soil, productive of fruit that was at once pure and enduring, raising her students not merely above their compeers in wisdom and learning—her two most obvious endowments; but inspiring them with a love of Goodness, imbuing them with a craving after Truth, never surpassed by other systems, and very rarely equalled. A very slight acquaintance with the lives of the philosophers from the time of the Ionians to that of Hegel is sufficient to demonstrate that each of them was pervaded with a spirit both of learning and purity greatly in advance of his time. But Spinoza, Berkeley, and Fichte in particular shine out to the admiring gaze as bright, almost unparalleled exemplars of goodness, and noble self-devotion to what they believed to be the Truth.[1]

With the subject of the latter part of this chapter, however, we are not able to yield this unqualified approbation. If Arthur Schopenhauer were no worse than the majority of men, he was certainly no better; and his almost puerile vanity forces us to the conviction that though he was a great and original preacher of philosophy, a philosopher in any adequate sense of the word he was not. He was a vain morbid egoist; endowed not only with an exaggerated craving after the admiration of his fellows, but with such an intense feeling of envy at the successes of others, that he never lost an opportunity of decrying or ridiculing any rival more fortunate than himself. And his doctrine of Pessimism by which he is chiefly remembered, appears to us to have arisen more from mortification at the non-recognition of the undoubtedly high

[1] Amongst the catalogue of philosophers who have led almost ideal lives of the purest virtue must not be forgotten to be mentioned David Hume. He it was of whom the calm unimpassioned Adam Smith could publicly write:—'Upon the whole, I have always considered him, both during his lifetime and since his death, as approaching as nearly to the idea of a perfectly wise and virtuous man as perhaps the nature of human frailty will permit.'

intellectual abilities he possessed, than from any deep sympathetic compassion with the miseries and sufferings of the desolate or unhappy. His philosophical insight led him to the rejection of the doctrine of Atheism, and to the acceptance of that of Pantheism. He could not believe that this world was a mere senseless machine; it was pervaded—filled to overflowing—with an active impulsive Will; from which Will Evil was far more frequently the product than was Good. Yet though, philosophically, Schopenhauer was a pantheist, morally, to all intents and purposes he was an atheist. For the moral aspect of Atheism may be defined as irreligion, non-belief in Goodness or the Power of Goodness, non-perception of Infinite Beauty, whether physical or moral. Religion, on the other hand, or the spirit of true Worship, is, as Carlyle has told us, 'transcendent Wonder;' wonder without limit or measure, reverent admiration alike for the immensity of Heaven, the aspiration of the human heart, or the capability of the human brain.[1]

To this feeling of wonder or reverent worship—the basis of all religions alike, whether ancient or modern—Schopenhauer was a stranger. How, indeed, should he wonder at, or reverently admire, that which he believed to be, almost without exception, one unmitigated Evil? Though he agreed with Fichte in believing that Will was the basis of all created Life, no two philosophers could be more radically opposed in their definition of what they conceived this Will to be. With the deeply religious Fichte this Will was a sublime infinite Will; a Law, determined by no fancy or caprice; eternal, unchangeable; the spiritual bond of the entire universe; the One True and Imperishable Spirit of Goodness for which the human soul yearns from its inmost depths; all else being

[1] 'The first condition of human goodness,' says George Eliot, 'is something to love; the second, something to reverence.' And Emerson tells us that 'the happiest man is he who learns from Nature the lesson of Worship.'

mere appearance, ever vanishing, ever returning in a new semblance. The Will of Schopenhauer was merely a blind impulse; an overmastering instinct for the continuation of Life. 'One enormous Will, constantly rushing into Life.' Although intelligent beings cannot fail to perceive that Life was not a thing to be desired, yet this All-Powerful Will was stronger than Intelligence; and forced men on, in spite of themselves, not only to the preservation of their own being, but to the propagation of their species. Yet the omnipotence of this Will was even more plainly shown in animals than in man, because animals were less endowed with the spirit of Intelligence wherewith to keep it at bay.

'Observe the restless industry of little wretched ants,' he says, 'the wonderful and skilful perseverance of the bees, or watch a single burying beetle bury a mole forty times its size in two days, in which to deposit its eggs, and insure nourishment for its future brood. This shows us how in reality the life of most insects is nothing but an endless labour to prepare food and dwelling for the brood which is to spring from their eggs, and which when they have devoured the nutriment, and become chrysalises, only enter into life to repeat the same operations. Similarly, the life of birds is almost spent in their far and weary wanderings, in the building of their nests, and in fetching food for the brood, who, next year, will enact the same part. Everything thus works for the future, which proves as bankrupt as the present. When we consider all this, we cannot help looking around for the reward of all this skill and trouble, for the end which makes these creatures strive so restlessly, and ask ourselves: What is the aim of all this? what is attained by this animal existence, which requires such immeasurable exertions? The only answer is: The satisfaction of hunger and the propagation of the species, and at best a little momentary pleasure such as now and then falls to the lot of every animal individual

between his eternal needs and exertions. If we compare the indescribable skill of preparation, the inexhaustible riches of the means, and the insignificance of the end in view, the conviction is forced upon us that life is a business whose profits do not nearly cover its expenses.'

Though we are by no means inclined to optimistic principles ourselves, we yet cannot help judging Schopenhauer to have been singularly unfortunate in his selection of illustrations at which to vent this somewhat exaggerated tirade. There is quite enough unhappiness in the world, quite enough misery; quite enough sin and wickedness to make anyone, not wholly callous or utterly selfish, liable at times to an intense consciousness of pessimism. The torturing physical disorders, apparently incapable of alleviation, such as cancer; the inherited moral evils of drunkenness or insanity, will make even the thoughtless consider before they subscribe to optimism in its entirety. But where the unthinking herd are made to think by isolated and startling circumstances appearing but rarely, the educated scholar by his very education, by his wide reading and general acquaintance with human history, is forced in spite of himself and in spite of all *à priori* reasonings to the contrary, to acknowledge that side by side with good and goodness grows and flourishes evil and wickedness. No impartial student of history can have completed his study, we imagine, without having arrived at the conclusion that though Truth in itself and taken in the abstract is certain sooner or later to conquer, the pioneers and propounders of Truth have been, almost without exception, doomed to martyrdom or undeserved penalties of opprobrium and punishment. Bruno and Galileo were persecuted and tortured for propounding doctrines which by virtue of their own inherent correctness have won an acceptance that is now universal. Yet we never hear of the persecutors or torturers of these scientific martyrs meeting with their just reward. In all probability their

prosperity was only increased by their very ignorance and cruelty. It is very difficult to comprehend why sin and its frequent offspring misery should be permitted to exist. It is tenfold more difficult to solve the riddle of goodness and nobleness perishing, while ignorance and wickedness are allowed to flourish.

Or if Arthur Schopenhauer had not cared to trouble himself with recollection of past history, the everyday inequalities of rank and fortune would have amply sufficed as illustrations for his pessimism. We cannot be acquainted with the most ordinary phases of society without perceiving that throughout the civilised world the industrious and hardly worked Many labour for the indolent and unproductive Few; for those who are consumers and not producers, parasites upon the brains and sinews of those from whom they derive their means of subsistence. Yet the consumers, not content with being consumers, are provided with tenfold more of this world's goods than are those who labour and consequently deserve to enter into the fruits of their labour.

But though quite capable of comprehending and sympathising with the pessimism that so often assails the humane man, we yet cannot help thinking the illustrations selected by Schopenhauer were wholly groundless and beyond the point. If the inequalities that strike us between the inmates of the drives and walks devoted to the fashionable inhabitants of a great city and those of the alleys and byeways immediately in their vicinity fill us with sadness, and a certain indignation at the glaring disproportion overpowering us, there arises a consequent pessimism at the injustice of life, nothing we imagine can sooner lift off that pessimism than proceeding to some rural spot 'wooded to the peak,' redolent with sweet smelling perfumes, in the young glory of a ripened spring, when the trees have fully awakened from their winter's sleep, but the leaves are still in the splendour of their early greenness, not

yet bowed down or darkened by the burden and heat of the summer's day. The joyous carolling of the birds busy with their conjugal and parental duties, the busy hum of innumerable insects telling us with their speechless voices that in the Work of life lies the Happiness of Life, all suffice to assure us that if there is darkness in the world there is also brightness; if there is evil there is also good. And the principal good of animal life, as the chief dignity of human life, lies in Work; but it must be voluntary work and congenial to us; not that which is enforced or distasteful. No true worker thinks merely of the end for which he is working. His work is in itself a sufficient end.[1] Ask the musician engaged on his composition whether he is greatly troubled about applause or wealth. They may come and he will gladly welcome them; but whether they come or no, he will still work on. With the exception perhaps of a few noble Reformers (in the truest sense of that word) such as Wilberforce, Mrs. Fry, Mary Carpenter, who have entirely devoted themselves to the impersonal and unselfish end they had in view, all our greatest men have felt that their work was to them a sufficient end in itself. They would have been grateful indeed had it been permitted them to prosecute it without molestation. The only reward Bruno received for his labours was death, the only glory for Galileo was torture. Yet when they were absorbed in the delight of their studies, even the risk they knew they were thereby incurring was powerless to hinder them in their pursuits. It is as difficult to prevent the true man of science from prosecuting the pursuit that fascinates him as to prevent the starving man from snatching at the first mouthful that is offered him. And the indulgence of this mental appetite is fully as grateful as the indulgence of the physical. The illustrations selected by

[1] 'Blessed is he who has found his work,' says Carlyle, 'let him ask no other blessedness. He has a work, a life purpose; he has found it, and will follow it.'

Schopenhauer in proof of the worthlessness and wretchedness of life are surely wonderfully inappropriate. No one can have watched the bird building its nest or feeding its young without perceiving that there is a very real satisfaction in the performance of these natural duties; that however poor the end might be, the pleasure of the means fully compensated for the poverty of the end. If Arthur Schopenhauer had been a more real philosopher; if he had been a Worker in the highest sense of the word, he would have found that in the work of his life lay the happiness of his life; he would not have chafed as he did at the little applause and reward allotted him. His own delight in his work would have rendered him almost indifferent to the uncertain rewards of praise or honour; at all events, he would have been enabled to wait with patience till appreciation came, not caring very greatly if it did not come at all.

As we have said, resentment at the non-appreciation of his talents seems to have been the principal inducement to his intense pessimism. In the other circumstances of his life there was little to call it forth. He was possessed of splendid health, of superior ability; his private income, though not excessive, was amply sufficient for his personal wants; and though his relations with his mother do not seem to have been very satisfactory, the feeling of admiration and affection with which he regarded his father must have almost atoned for the want of sympathy between himself and his other parent. Moreover, the fact that, in his old age, as Fame began to gradually dawn upon him, Pessimism almost in the same ratio withdrew herself from him, testifies, we think, to our justification in concluding that mortified vanity was the principal basis of all his discontent.

We must proceed without further digression, however,

to give a somewhat more orderly account of his life and his philosophy.[1]

Arthur Schopenhauer was born at Danzig on February 22, 1788. His father, a conscientious, industrious merchant, of respectable, but by no means aristocratic family, had at the age of thirty-eight, fallen in love with Johanna Henriette Trosiener, a pretty girl of barely eighteen, whose father was member of the Danzig Senate, and who though not wealthy, was yet counted amongst the patricians of the city. Separated alike by years as well as by social standing, it was strange that the marriage should have turned out even as well as it did. Yet on the whole it was a fairly happy union. The young wife confesses she 'was proud of belonging to the man,' yet she owns also she feigned as little ardent love for him as he demanded it from her. The love of travel was the one passion they shared in common, and for the first twelve years of his life the little Schopenhauer had the advantage of an almost cosmopolitan training in lieu of the dull scholastic drudgery usually the lot of boys of his age. He always expressed himself thankful for this, as he justly terms it, 'inestimable advantage.' To one of his peculiar character such a training must have been singularly beneficial, for it not only afforded him a wide acquaintance with the habits of other nations, and with the beauties of other countries, but brought him into contact also with the best minds of the time. As a child numerous celebrities could be numbered amongst his acquaintance, Klopstock, Madame de Staël, Nelson, and many others. It was probably this early acquaintance with very cultivated minds that was the primary origin of his desire to adopt literature as a profession; for when he was some twelve or fourteen years of age, he entreated his father to allow him the privilege of a collegiate education. To this

[1] For many incidents in this account of Schopenhauer, I am indebted to Miss Helen Zimmern's interesting little book on 'Arthur Schopenhauer, his Life and his Philosophy.'

request, however, the elder Schopenhauer returned a stern refusal. The merchant had been too successful in his own commercial career not to desire that his son should follow in his footsteps; and had, moreover, the strong contempt for the votaries of literature not unusual from the very practical to what they cannot help regarding as the exclusively unpractical. Though with a heavy heart, the boy obeyed his father's commands without a reproach or murmur. Indeed the strong reverence and attachment evinced by him for his father was, in our opinion, the great redeeming point of one who in the other relations of his life seldom allowed consideration towards others to weigh against his own profit or pleasure.

In his seventeenth year Arthur Schopenhauer had the misfortune to lose this beloved father. Perhaps no stronger example of the reverence with which he regarded him can be given than in the fact that though now his own master, and possessed of a sufficient competency, he was yet determined to devote himself to the distasteful occupation of merchandize, simply because his father had so desired.

In spite of his extreme youth, Schopenhauer was, at the death of his father, practically freed from all control. As we have said, the relations between himself and his mother never seem to have been very satisfactory. It is difficult to determine who was really in fault; or whether, in the beginning, there was any conscious fault to be imputed to either of the parties. The seeds of quarrels, as the seeds of almost everything in Nature, are, for the most part, wonderfully small; and pass, almost imperceptibly, from one stage of development to another, no man knowing how or when. The most noxious weeds too often grow most rapidly apace; and when full grown entirely baffle the power of man to eradicate. Yet even the deepest rooted plants are easily quashed when they are still seeds. Should we not consider this with regard to the

seeds of quarrels, and hesitate before we allow the minute things to germinate?

There is little doubt that this antagonism between mother and son indirectly shed an unhappy influence over the whole of Schopenhauer's career; for by a somewhat unreasonable generalisation he transferred his aversion to his mother to aversion to the whole female sex; and thus was denied the softening influence of wife or child. It is difficult, as we have said, to determine which of the parties was originally in fault. From his earliest infancy there had been an antagonism between Schopenhauer and his mother; and the want of harmony always more or less apparent, even during his father's lifetime, began to make itself more clearly palpable now that that father could no longer mediate between them. Johanna Schopenhauer's volatility and love of pleasure had long repelled her son, and the little regret she evinced for the loss of his beloved parent grated upon all his nobler feelings. She seems to have regarded her husband's death more as a signal of release for herself than with the sentiment of tender regret natural for a wife to have felt for one who had always been a faithful generous husband to her. Weary of the society of the respectable Hamburg burghers, she removed, almost immediately after her husband's death, to the vicinity of Weimar, a town then in the zenith of its glory as a centre of cultivated society. Here she passed the happiest days of her life, admired by many, courted by not a few. She was witty, gay, vivacious; and in after years attracted some considerable attention by the ability she displayed in the lighter forms of literature. But while she was thus in the enjoyment of prosperity she thought little of her lonely son, bent upon carrying out the wishes of his father; earnestly, though vainly, endeavouring to reconcile himself to an occupation that was daily becoming more distasteful to him.

Still, in spite of all his struggles, his love for science

and philosophy grew stronger and stronger. Many a time was he tempted to escape from the drudgery of the desk in order to listen to philosophical and scientific lectures. After a year consumed in this unsatisfactory life, Schopenhauer came to the conclusion that it was practically impossible to be thus the follower of two masters. His letters grew to be little more than melancholy repetitions of the little interest he could conjure up in his own future. For once in her life, his mother could sympathize with her son in this dislike to a business career. She not only gave him full permission to renounce his former occupation, but entreated him to enter at once upon an academic course of study. Arthur received the information of this change in his prospects with a flood of tears, and with boyish impetuosity proceeded to enter upon his new career, in which he speedily attracted attention by the unusual ability he displayed in classics and philosophy. In 1807 he quitted the college at Gotha to finish his studies at the Weimar University, which was at that time justly celebrated for the exceptional brilliancy of her students. At his mother's express desire, however, he did not live under her roof.

'It is needful to my happiness,' she wrote to him shortly before his arrival, 'to know that you are happy, but not to be a witness of it. I have always told you it is difficult to live with you; and the better I get to know you the more I feel this difficulty increase, at least for me. I will not hide it from you: as long as you are what you are, I would rather make any sacrifice than consent to live with you. I do not undervalue your good points, and that which repels me does not lie in your heart; it is in your outer, not your inner being; in your ideas, your judgment, your habit; in a word, there is nothing concerning the outer world in which we agree. Your ill-humour, your complaints of things inevitable, your sullen looks, the extraordinary opinions you utter, like oracles none may presume to contradict; all this depresses me, and troubles me, without

helping you. Your eternal quibbles, your laments over the stupid world and human misery, give me bad nights and unpleasant dreams.'

The first work that Schopenhauer brought before the public was a short tractate, entitled *Die Vierfache Wurzel des Satzes vom Zureichenden Grunde*, or 'On the Quadruple Root of the Doctrine of Adequate Cause.' He sent it in for the inspection of the University of Jena; and the approbation he there gained by it was sufficient to procure for him the dignity of Doctor of Philosophy. The chief doctrine embodied in this work was an attempt to show that the idea of causality is not grounded upon a single axiom or necessary truth, but upon four; or rather, perhaps, upon one necessary truth contemplated in a fourfold aspect according to its relation to any one in particular of the four classes comprising everything capable of being regarded by us as an object, *i.e.*, the entire compass of our ideas. These four aspects were: Phenomena, or the objects of sensuous perception; Reason, or the objects of rational perception; Being, under the categories of space and time; and the Will.

It was an abstruse work, and one not likely to be appreciated, probably not even comprehended, by a gay, volatile woman. Yet we think that the dictates of common courtesy, to say nothing of the tender pride common to most parental hearts, should have prompted his one remaining parent to, at all events, simulate some little interest in this her son's first attempt at authorship. Yet when on his arrival at Weimar, still in the first flush of youthful pride from his recent honours at Jena, he hastened to his mother, and placed a copy of his work in her hands, her only reception of the gift was a sneer and a sarcastic exclamation:—

'"The fourfold root," she said. 'Oh, I suppose that is a book for apothecaries.'

'Mother,' he broke out passionately, 'it will be read

when even the lumber-room will not contain a copy of your works.'

'The whole edition of yours will be still on hand,' was her cutting reply.

The *Vierfache Wurzel* was fortunate enough to procure for its author at least one valuable friend—one no less distinguished than the celebrated Goethe—who speedily recognised the unusual ability which Schopenhauer undoubtedly possessed. He even condescended to lay before the young author his views upon the Theory of Colours, a confidence that was very gratefully appreciated by the young man, coming, as it did, from one forty years his senior. Schopenhauer avowed himself a disciple of Goethe in this new theory, and was courageous enough to acknowledge himself a proselyte to an opinion which was at that time (and, as it has been since proved, deservedly so) unusually unpopular and covered with ridicule. The friendship thus begun only terminated with Goethe's life.

In the spring of 1818 Schopenhauer completed the first volume of the one important work of his life, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*. The manuscript was sent to Messrs. Brockhaus, of Leipzig, who gladly undertook its publication, paying the author a ducat a printed sheet.

'Whoever has accomplished a great immortal work,' wrote Schopenhauer as he sent it abroad for the criticism of the public, 'whoever has accomplished a great immortal work, will be as little hurt with its reception from the public or swayed by the opinions of critics, as a sane man in a madhouse is affected by the upbraidings and aggressions of the insane.' A spirit of proud indifference that it would have been better for Schopenhauer had he really possessed, but his subsequent conduct proved that these brave words were merely a flimsy disguise for the anticipations of mortified vanity.

On the completion of his work he set off for Italy. His early work on 'The Fourfold Root' had been fairly

well received by the critics, and had called forth unusual attention from the learned in the various colleges and academies. It was not unnatural, therefore, that Schopenhauer should flatter himself that this larger work would at least attract as much attention as the first little treatise of his early youth. In these hopes he was doomed to be disappointed. It is possible that the very fact that it was a larger and more important work may have frightened away general readers from its perusal; and philosophers pure and simple were at that time too much wedded to the Fichte and Hegel school of thought to pay much regard to so very opposite a mode of thinking. Amongst the few, however, who did appreciate it must be reckoned Jean Paul Richter, who thus expressed himself upon it:—

'A bold philosophic many-sided work, full of genius, profoundness, and penetration, but with a depth often hopeless and bottomless, akin to the melancholy sunless lake in Norway, that is barred by a stern rampart of beetling crags, in whose depth only the starry day is reflected, whose surface no bird skims, no wave upheaves.'

Schopenhauer spent two years in Italy, vainly hoping that Fame would shortly dawn upon him, and he be promoted to some academic chair. In his practical life he was no ascetic. He had an intense contempt for the intellect of women, but was keenly susceptible to their power of fascination; and frequently lamented himself at the marvellous sway their physical beauty exercised over him. During his sojourn in Italy, in particular, he abandoned himself to this delight in feminine charms; partly, no doubt, because only in such a way could he divert himself from the gloomy anticipations that were besetting him through the tardy appreciation of his book.

In the midst of this somewhat frivolous mode of spending his life, he was startled by a rumour relating to the firm in which most of his fortune was invested. He hastened back to Germany without delay, just in time to

discover that the Danzig firm was on the eve of bankruptcy. By his strong practical sense and steady industry he so managed that but a small portion of his own fortune was involved in the general wreck. His mother was not so fortunate. Her capital, too, was entirely invested in this firm; but she refused to let her son manage for her; and consequently nearly the whole of her fortune was scattered to the winds. It is a pleasing trait to be able to relate in the life of Schopenhauer, that, notwithstanding his mother's pecuniary ruin was almost entirely the product of her own self-will, and that, moreover, her conduct to her son had not been of such a description as to make any great demands upon his gratitude, she was nevertheless kept by that son in comparative comfort during the remainder of her days.

All his life long Schopenhauer had set great store upon the advantage of possessing a small private competence, and the danger he had so narrowly escaped did but serve to strengthen him in his previous opinion. No true philosopher, he thought, could devote himself entirely to his work unless freed from the necessity of bread-winning. Luxuries might be dispensed with, but the provision of necessities was an essential element in the philosopher's career. For this reason, he declared, the difference between a man who has an income of a thousand thalers and one who has a hundred thousand, is much less than between the former and one who has nothing. 'I do not deem it in any way unworthy of my pen,' he writes in a subsequent work, 'to urge the care of earned and inherited fortune. For to possess at the outset so much that it were possible to live, though alone and without family, comfortably and in real independence—that is without working—is an inestimable advantage; for it is the exemption and immunity from the privation and worry attendant on human life, and thus the emancipation from the universal villanage, the natural lot of mortals. He only who is thus favoured by

fate is born a truly free man; for thus only he is *sui juris*, master of his time and his powers, and may say every morning "The day is mine."'

One of the many sources of his filial gratitude to his father lay in his recognition of the fact that his present freedom from pecuniary anxieties owed its origin to the unremitting industry and self-denial of the elder Schopenhauer. The collected edition of his works was dedicated to the memory of his father; and he wrote a Preface, intended (though by some means omitted) for publication, as a testimony to his deep filial affection. Through some cause, either accidental or otherwise, this Preface did not appear in its destined place; but Miss Zimmern has quite rightly deemed it worthy of preservation, and we therefore quote it as we find it on the twenty-second and twenty-third pages of her interesting little book:—

'Noble, beneficent spirit! to whom I owe all that I am, your protecting care has sheltered and guided me, not only through helpless childhood and thoughtless youth, but in manhood and up to the present day. When bringing a son such as I am into the world, you made it possible for him to exist and to develop his individuality in a world like this. Without your protection I should have perished an hundred times over. A decided bias, which made only one occupation congenial, was too deeply rooted in my very being for me to do violence to my nature, and force myself, careless of existence, at best to devote my intellect merely to the preservation of my person; my sole aim in life how to procure my daily bread. You seem to have understood this; to have known beforehand that I should hardly be qualified to till the ground, or to win my livelihood by devoting my energies to any mechanical craft. You must have foreseen that your son, oh proud republican! would not endure to crouch before ministers and councillors, Mæcenases and their satellites, in company with mediocrity and servility, in order to beg ignobly for

bitterly earned bread; that he could not bring himself to flatter puffed-up insignificance or join the sycophantic throng of charlatans and bunglers; but that, as your son, he would think, with the Voltaire whom you honoured, "Nous n'avons que deux jours à vivre: il ne vaut pas la peine de les passer à ramper devant les coquins méprisables."

'Therefore I dedicate my work to you, and call after you to your grave the thanks I owe to you and to none other. "Nam Cæsar nullis nobis hæc otia fecit."

'That I was able to cultivate the powers with which nature endowed me, and put them to their proper use; that I was able to follow my innate bias, and think and work for many, while none did aught for me: this I owe to you, my father, I owe it to your activity, your wisdom, your frugality, your forethought for the future. Therefore, I honour you, my noble father; and therefore, whosoever finds any pleasure, comfort, or instruction in my work, shall learn your name, and know that if Heinrich Floris Schopenhauer had not been the man he was, Arthur Schopenhauer would have stumbled an hundred times. Let my gratitude render the only homage possible to you who have ended life: let it bear your name as far as mine is capable of carrying it.'

In 1820 Schopenhauer removed to Berlin, at which city he hoped to attract some attention through the mediumship of delivering lectures. Unfortunately for him, his lectures were as little successful as had been the work of which he was so proud. And it is now for the first time that his mortified vanity begins to find vent in expressions that were at once unjust and ludicrously unphilosophical:—

'People like Fichte, Schelling, or Hegel, should be shut out from the ranks of philosophers, as of yore the dealers and money-changers were cast out of the Temple.'

'Hegel's philosophy is just calculated for the specious wisdom pronounced *ex cathedrâ*, inasmuch as instead of

thoughts it contains mere words, and the boys want words to copy and take home with them; they do not want thoughts. Added to this that their results do not differ from the axioms of the natural religion which all have imbibed with their mother's milk; it must therefore please them greatly to encounter these again in a tortuous, showy, bombastic *galimatias* of words.

'I have lifted the veil of truth higher than any mortal before me, but I should like to see the man who could boast of a more miserable set of contemporaries than mine.

'There is no philosophy in the period between Kant and myself, only mere university charlatanism. Whoever reads these scribblers has lost just as much time as he has spent over them.

'It enters my mind as little to mix in the philosophic disputes of the day, as to go down and take part when I see the mob having a scuffle in the street.

'He who stands alone on a height to which the others cannot ascend, must descend to them if he does not wish to be alone.

'Study to acquire an accurate and connected view of the utter despicability of mankind in general, then of your own contemporaries and the German scholars in particular; then you will not stand with your work in your hand and say, "Is the world mad or I?"'

Disgusted with the want of appreciation awarded him at Berlin, he removed to Frankfort, where the secluded, anchorite life he led procured for him such nicknames as 'the Whimsical Fool of Frankfort,' 'the Modern Ascetic,' 'the Misanthrope of Frankfort,' &c. His vanity increased upon him in the exact ratio of his want of success, amounting at times to ill-breeding, if not to absolute rudeness. An anecdote is related of him which renders us half amused, half amazed, at the utterly uncalled-for manner in which he paraded this vanity:—

Seated one day at a dining-table in an hotel, he was

indulging himself somewhat to excess in the pleasures of the table, when he noticed a stranger gazing at him in some amusement. 'Sir,' remarked Schopenhauer immediately, 'you are astonished at my appetite. True, I eat three times as much as you, but then I have three times as much mind.' An assumption that was certainly not only rude but purely gratuitous, inasmuch as he did not in the least know who this stranger was.

So, quietly and uneventfully, passed away the life of Arthur Schopenhauer for some seventeen years. Lonely, restless, and morbidly vain, he had through his irritability of temper, coupled with his want of sympathy, alienated all his acquaintances and nearly all his friends. In spite of his passionate admiration for feminine beauty, he had a too thorough contempt for the whole sex to commit himself to matrimony; even had he been possessed of sufficient means to make it advisable for him to incur the responsibility, which in his own opinion he was not. 'Matrimony—War and Want,' was a favourite maxim of his. So, unwedded and unloved, he passed in solitude the best years of his maturity.

In 1836 Schopenhauer broke his seventeen years' silence by a short treatise on 'The Will in Nature;' and in 1839 he was a successful competitor for a prize offered by the Royal Norwegian Academy of Drontheim for the best Essay on the Freedom of the Will and the Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity. Encouraged by this first gleam of prosperity he entered the lists for another prize offered by the Danish Academy. This time, however, he was unsuccessful. And as in former years jealousy at the greater popularity of Fichte and Hegel had rendered him almost unscrupulous in venting his spleen upon those unoffending philosophers; so now, because the Academy of Denmark had thought fit to withhold a reward for which in their opinion he was not fully qualified, he poured upon the sages of Copenhagen invectives that

were not only unmerited on their part, but exceedingly undignified on his.

The second volume of *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* was a work very near his heart; and, in spite of the little success of his first volume, he worked at it slowly and industriously till in the year 1843 it was fully completed. He then wrote to Brockhaus, his former publisher, offering the second volume for his purchase. That publisher, however, had lost so considerably by the purchase of the first volume, that in justice to his own pocket he was forced to pen a courteous but decided refusal.

The mortification experienced by Schopenhauer on the reception of this refusal will be seen from the following passages we have selected from the answer he returned:—

'Sir,—The refusal contained in your letter was as unexpected as it was disappointing. Is the notorious degeneracy of the age really so great that while Hegel's nonsense attains many editions, and the worthless philosophic jargons of a thousand common-place brains is paid by the public, a publisher will not even venture the cost of printing on a work of mine, which contains the labour of my whole life? Well then, my work shall be left alone, to appear some time as posthumous, when the generation has come that will welcome every line of my writings. It will not fail to come.

'Meanwhile I do not regard all this as fixed and decided, on the contrary, at present I will leave no worthy means untried of bringing to the light of day this work, completed with so much love and enthusiasm. In the first place, I offer you the second volume without honorarium. You must surely see that the possessors of the first volume will take as many copies of the second volume of a work of whose worth they have understood something as are necessary to cover the costs of printing. Besides, this volume contains the concentration of all the thoughts I have set down in the last twenty-four years. If you were

here I would show you certain parts of it. I would take any wager that you would then hesitate no longer. If there is no clever man about you who has sufficient knowledge, understanding, and impartiality to make you aware of the worth of my work, why read what Jean Paul says of the book which you found such a bad speculation. Look at the place I occupy among the first rank of philosophers, in Rosenkranz's "History of Kant's Philosophy;" or read in the "Pilot" of May 1841 an essay written by an entire stranger, called "Last Judgment upon Hegel's Philosophy," which speaks of me with the highest praise, and says that I am plainly the greatest philosopher of the age, which is really saying much less than the good man thinks (!) The want of a publisher may vex me greatly, but it cannot change my opinion of the case. Just the same happened to the great Hume—nay worse, for according to his own account, in the first year after the publication of his English History, the publisher only sold forty-five copies, and now, after eighty years, it appears afresh every few years in the original, and in translations. I read this winter in your own *Conversations-Blatt*, that Göschen complained of the bad sale of "Iphigenie" and "Egmont," and that "Wilhelm Meister" would not sell at all. But the newspaper, *Die Lokomotive*, sells 8,000 copies daily; that shows the relation between value and demand. Still I do not in any way reproach you for speaking from your own stand-point, as I do from mine; you cannot live by posterity. Therefore I once more await your decision, and remain, &c.'

After some delay, and upon the reception of another letter from Schopenhauer, Brockhaus was at last persuaded to undertake the second volume of *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*; and Schopenhauer writes back his thanks in extreme delight:—

'Sir,—The announcement of the change in your determination has given me much pleasure. I acknowledge

this candidly; but just as candidly I assure you of my firm conviction that you will not be doing a bad business by undertaking my work, but, rather a very good one; so that the day may come when you will laugh heartily at your hesitation to risk the cost of printing. What is truly and earnestly meant is often very slow, but always sure to gain way, and remains afterwards in continual esteem. The great soap-bubble of the Fichte-Schelling-Hegel philosophy is at length about to burst, at the same time the need of Philosophy is greater than ever; more solid nourishment will now be sought, and this is only to be found in me, the despised, because I am the only one who has wrought from an inward call.'

His pride in this second volume of his work, the exorbitant vanity with which he regarded it, was, if possible, even greater than that with which he had previously regarded the first. Writing to a friend concerning it he did not attempt to hide his entire satisfaction with it.

'For where, in the range of German literature,' he asks, 'is there another book which, wherever it is opened, immediately reveals more thoughts than it is possible to grasp, like my second volume of *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung?*

And now what were the doctrines of this work, 'The World as Will and Notion (or Representation),' of which the author held such an exalted opinion? They are wonderfully able and original, and certainly display far more ability than one might be led to expect from the puerile vanity of their expounder; for as a rule, vanity displays itself in exact ratio with incompetence and vacuity.

The two volumes are divided into four books, the first and third of which relate to the World as Notion or Representation, and the second and fourth to the World as Will. Subjoined is a critique of the Kantian Philosophy.

The first book begins with the proposition:—'The World is my Notion.' There is no object without a subject;

no perception without a perceiving mind. Materialism is so far unphilosophical and unverifiable, inasmuch as it leaves out of consideration the knowing subject and the forms of knowledge, although these are as clearly presupposed in the coarsest matter with which materialism would begin, as in the organism with which it would end, 'No object without subject,' is the principle which for ever renders all materialism impossible. On the other hand, continues Schopenhauer, Fichte, who began with the knowing subject, in diametrical opposition to materialism, which begins with the object known—overlooked the circumstance that with the subjective he had already posited the objective, because no subject is conceivable without object; and that his deduction of object from subject, like all deduction, rested on the principle of sufficient reason, which is nothing else than the universal form of the objective as such; but consequently since it presupposes the objective, it can have no value or application apart from the objective. The only real point of departure for philosophy lies (according to Schopenhauer) in the *notion* which is the primitive and essential form of consciousness; the form of the object, on the contrary, is the principle of sufficient reason in its various shapes. Thus the notion we have of the world is only one side of the world, and that, so to speak, its external side. But there is another and an entirely different side of the world; namely, its innermost essence, its substance, the thing-in-itself, which from the most direct of the forms in which it is objectified should be termed Will.

The Second Book is devoted to a description of the various forms in which this Will displays itself.

Every person knows himself in two ways. He knows himself as an object, amongst other and various objects; and he knows himself also as one who wills, who is capable of volition. Yet, as he himself is conscious of volition, he cannot help judging others like himself to be equally

guided by volition. We are justified, therefore, in employing the two-fold knowledge which is given us, in two wholly heterogeneous ways: of the essence and operation of our own bodies, as a key to the essence of every phenomenon in nature, and in judging all objects other than our bodies after the analogy of our bodies, even though they be not represented to our consciousness in the twofold manner, viz., objectively and subjectively. We cannot help supposing that our knowledge of all objects lies merely in the 'notion' we may form of them; but in addition to this, if we try to make abstractions of all objects, that which afterwards remains must be, in its innermost essence, that which we name Will. Will is the noumenon of every subject as of every object. It is completely different from phenomena, which are merely its manifestations. The Will, as a thing-in-itself, is One, while its manifestations are innumerable.

The lowest stage in the objectification of the Will is represented by the most general forces of nature which are either present in all matter without exception, such for instance, as gravity; or variously distributed through it; that is to say, different portions appearing in different objects, such as electricity, elasticity, rigidity, &c. The higher stages in the objectification of the Will are manifested in the plants and animals up to man. In all these various objects the Will displays itself to us only *mediately*, we only perceive a sort of image of it. The only *immediate* objectifications of the Will are our Ideas. According as the organism succeeds in overcoming those forces of nature which express inferior stages in the objectification of the Will, it becomes a more or less perfect expression of its idea, *i.e.*, it stands nearer to, or farther from, its ideal.

Book the Third is occupied with Schopenhauer's notion of Art as it rests upon the above theory of ideas.

Cognition, although it belongs to the higher stages of the objectification of the Will, that is to say, it belongs to

animals and to man, is yet in its lower stages merely the servant of the Will. In animals this servitude never ceases. It merely forces the subject on to actions immediately subservient to the preservation of life or the propagation of the species. But when the cognition attains a higher stage it is able to appreciate knowledge for itself, and not merely for the end to which it is subservient. This sort of knowledge is the source of Art. Art, the work of genius, repeats the Eternal Ideas apprehended in pure contemplation, the essential and permanent in all the phenomena of the world. Its only aim is the communication of this knowledge. According to the material in which it repeats itself it is plastic art, poetry, or music. The reality of life, the whole of existence is perpetual suffering; partly dreadful, partly pitiable. The only exception to this otherwise universal suffering lies in the pure enjoyment of Art; because this enjoyment has nothing to do with the desire for the preservation of oneself or the propagation of the species. But it is only in rare moments we are able to indulge in this enjoyment. The greatest enthusiast in Art is unable to prevent the pangs of hunger obtruding themselves upon his attention.

Book the Fourth contains Schopenhauer's ideas of Ethics.

The highest ethical quality in Schopenhauer's opinion is sympathy with the suffering one sees around one. This world is not the best, it is the worst, of all possible worlds. Yet sympathy alleviates suffering; and in process of time sympathy will lead to asceticism, which is a quality even more necessary than sympathy. Most of our sufferings arise from our desire of life. Asceticism will serve to check this desire. If we wish to attain peace and rest, we must endeavour to convert willing into non-willing; we must learn to die to the very desire to live.

Such is a very brief, and we are afraid, somewhat dry,

abstract of the principal doctrines contained in these four books. We must now endeavour to make those doctrines a little more intelligible to the general reader.

Will is the immanent principle of the universe. Every other quality is subordinate to it; or rather, may be called the transitory phenomena of which Will is the noumenon.

'If we examine our knowledge we shall see that what is most generally known in us is the Will with its affections: to strive, to desire, to fly, to hope, to fear, to love, to hate; in a word, all that relates to our well or ill being, all that is a modification of willing or not-willing. Therefore even in our Will is the primitive and essential element.

'The basis of consciousness in every animal is *desire*. This fundamental fact is shown by the tendency to preserve life and well-being, and to reproduce. It is this tendency which, according as it is thwarted or gratified, produces joy, anger, fear, hatred, love, selfishness, &c. This fundament is common to the polypus and to man. The difference between animals springs from a difference in understanding. Therefore Will is the primitive and essential, Intelligence the secondary and accidental fact,

'If we examine the animal series we shall see that as we descend intelligence becomes feebler and more imperfect while the Will undergoes no similar degradation. In the smallest insect the Will is entire; it wills what it wills quite as completely as man. Will is always identical with itself; its function is of the very simplest kind—to will or not to will.

'Intelligence tires, Will is indefatigable. Intelligence being secondary and physical, is, as such, subject to the *force of inertia*, which explains why intellectual work requires moments of repose, and why age causes degeneracy of the brain, followed by imbecility or insanity. When we see men like Swift, Kant, Walter Scott, Southey, Wordsworth, and so many others sink into childishness, or

into a state of intellectual feebleness, how can we deny that Intelligence is a pure organ, a function of the body, while the body is a function of the Will?

Though no ascetic in his own life, Schopenhauer nevertheless laid great stress upon the beneficial influence of asceticism. All ill-doing has, he believed, its origin in selfishness. 'The Will to live' comprehends self-assertion in every form and shape. But the ideal of a good man's life should be pure unselfishness. To blend his life with those of others; to look upon the sorrows of others as his own; to endeavour to understand, instead of condemning, the sins of such as are tempted; to remember that it is the all-powerful Will which is at the root of their temptations; that it is impossible to lead a really good life till all desire for life itself is relinquished, and that asceticism is the chief promoter of this self-abnegation; all this should be the object of the good man's life. Yet in judging and condemning those who have fallen short of this ideal, he must always remember how difficult it is of attainment through the power of this 'Will to live!'

'Intellect flags, Will is indefatigable. After continuous headwork, the brain is fatigued, like the arm after continuous bodily labour. All cognition is connected with exertion, but to will is our individual being, whose manifestations continue without any trouble and entirely of themselves. Therefore, when the Will is greatly excited, asi n all passions,—in anger, fear, desire, sorrow, &c.,—and we are summoned to understand the motives of these passions in order to rectify them, the compulsion we have to exert over ourselves attests the transition from the original, natural, and individual activity, to that which is derived, indirect, and constrained. Will alone is uninvited; therefore often too ready and too strong in its activity, knowing no fatigue. Infants, who scarcely manifest the first traces of intelligence, are already full of self-will. By purposeless kicking and crying they show the power of

will with which they are overflowing, although their will has as yet no object, *i.e.*, they will, without knowing what they will. Precipitation, a fault which is more or less common to all men, and is only conquered by education, is another proof of the indefatigable energy of the will. It consists in the will hurrying before its time to the work. Being a purely active and executive function, it should not assert itself until the explorative and deliberative, and therefore the apprehending power, has entirely completed its task. But this moment is rarely awaited. Scarcely have we seized and hastily connected by cognition a few data on the circumstances in question—a particular event, or an opinion expressed by another—than out of the depth of our being there arises, uninvited, the ever-ready, never-tiring Will, and manifests itself as terror, fear, hope, pleasure, desire, envy, sorrow, zeal, anger, courage; and impels to rash words and deeds. These are generally followed by remorse, when time has taught us that the hegemon, the intellect, was not half able to finish its work of understanding the circumstances, considering their relation, and determining what should be done, because the Will would wait no longer, and sprang up long before its time with: Now it is my turn! Of ten things that vex us, nine would not have the power to do so if we understood them and their causes thoroughly, and therefore recognised their necessity and true condition. We should do this much oftener if we made them sooner an object of consideration, and not of rashness and vexation. For the Intellect is to the Will in man what the bridle and bit are to an untamed horse: it must be led by this bridle, by means of instruction, warning, education, &c., or alone it is as wild and fierce an impulse as the power shown in the dashing waterfall, and is, as we know in its root, identical with it. In the most violent anger, in despair, in intoxication, it has taken the bit between its teeth, has run away and followed its original nature. In the *mania sine delirio* it has lost bit and bridle, and plainly

shows its original nature, and that the intellect is as foreign to it as the bridle to the horse. In this state it may be compared to a watch which runs down unchecked when deprived of a certain screw.'

But the strongest form of manifestation this Will takes lies in the sexual passion, by which men are impelled, often in spite of themselves, to the propagation of the species. Next to love of life, if not even before it, this is the most powerful spring of action. 'It ceaselessly occupies the strength and thought of the younger portion of mankind, is the final goal of all human endeavours, exerts a noxious influence over the most important concerns, interrupts at any hour the most serious occupations, confuses for a time even the most vigorous intellects, does not hesitate to interpose its frivolity amid the conferences of statesmen and the researches of scholars, places its love-letters and locks of hair between ministerial portfolios and philosophic manuscripts, daily knits the worst and most entangled *liaisons*, loosens the most sacred relationships, the firmest ties; causes the sacrifice of rank, happiness, and even wealth; makes the honourable man unscrupulous, the faithful man a traitor: in short, appears everywhere as an antagonistic demon that turns all things upside down.' The strength of this passion is enormous. Its imperviousness to all control may be best seen by its being so seldom controlled. For were it possible to control it, it is scarcely conceivable man would refuse to exercise such control, seeing that by so doing he could in less than a single century bring the whole dreadful tragedy of this pitiable existence to an end.

Not without purpose have we brought Leibnitz the philosopher of optimism into juxtaposition with Schopenhauer the philosopher of pessimism, for it cannot fail to be suggestive when two authors differing so widely from each other in the majority of their conclusions should yet agree so nearly in their major premiss, *i.e.* in their belief in the Unity that underlies variety; Unity never differing in form,

only in degree; displaying itself alike in mineral, plant or animal.

Leibnitz considered that all Monads were possessed of ideas. God was the primitive Monad, of which all other Monads were its fulgurations. Plants and minerals were as it were, sleeping Monads, with unconscious ideas. In plants, those ideas are formative, vital, forces; in animals, they take the form of sensation and memory; in human souls, they take the form of consciousness and reason.

Schopenhauer believed that gravitation, electricity, and, in fact, every form of action, from the fall of an apple to the foundation of a republic, is an expression of the Will, and nothing more. The whole world being simply and entirely Will, develops itself in a series of manifestations, which rise in a graduated scale, from the so-called laws of matter to that consciousness, which in the inferior animals reaches the state of sensibility and understanding, and in man reaches that higher state called reason.

'We shall now make use,' says Schopenhauer in *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*,—'we shall now make use of the knowledge that we have of the essence and operation of our own bodies, as a key to the essence of every phenomenon in nature, and with respect to those objects which are not our own body—and therefore are not revealed to us in a double manner, but as outward representations only—form a judgment according to the analogy of that body and essence, that as, on the one hand, they are phenomena like itself, so, on the other hand, when we set aside their existence as phenomena of the subject, that which remains must, in its own essence, be the same as that which in ourselves we call the Will. 'For what other sort of existence in reality should we ascribe to the rest of the corporeal world? Whence procure the elements out of which such a world could be composed? Besides the Will and the phenomena, nothing is known to us or is even conceivable. When we would ascribe to the corporeal

world, which only exists in our own perceptive faculty, the greatest reality of which we are aware, we ascribe to it that reality which every one finds in his body, for that to us is more real than anything else. But when we analyse the reality of this body and its actions, we find, beyond its existence as one of our phenomena, nothing but the Will; herein is the whole of its reality, and we can never find any other sort of reality, which we can ascribe to the corporeal world. If, therefore, the corporeal world is to be something more than a mere phenomenon of our minds, we must say, that besides this visible existence, it is in itself, and in its own essence that which we immediately find in ourselves as the Will. . . . . We must, however, distinguish from the veritable essence of the Will that which does not belong to it, but only to its appearance in the world of phenomena, of which there are many degrees; as for instance, its accompaniment by knowledge, and its consequent determination by motives. This belongs not to its essence, but merely to its clearest manifestations, in the form of animal or man. When I say, therefore, that the power which impels the stone towards the earth is, in its own essence, apart from all manifestation, the Will, I do not mean to express the absurdity, that the stone is conscious of a motive of action, because the Will appears accompanied by consciousness in man.'

Schopenhauer resembled Leibnitz in his intense tenderness to animals; and his conviction of the identity of their physical nature with our own made him regard wilful cruelty to animals to be fully as vicious as wilful cruelty to human beings. He was a great student of Oriental Philosophy; and in his tenderness towards animal life, as well as in his inculcation of asceticism, greatly resembled the Indian writers. He had an immense reverence for Buddha, and with characteristic vanity was fond of comparing himself with that unique philosopher. How greatly inferior he was in character need scarcely be remarked. Neverthe-

less, in his doctrine there is a decided resemblance. There is the same intense pessimism; the same conviction that Will or Desire is the root of all evil; and that the extinction of desire is the sole means of attaining perfection.

'In reading the lives of Christian and Indian penitents,' he says, 'we are greatly struck by their similarity. With an utter dissimilarity of dogmas, customs, and external circumstances, their aspirations and inner life are identical. . . . . Quietism, *i.e.*, renunciation of all Will; asceticism, *i.e.*, the recognition of the identity of the individual with the All, or the core of the universe: these all stand in close connection, so that he who acknowledges one of them is gradually led to take up the others, even against his intention. Nothing is more astonishing than the unanimity of all who profess these principles, notwithstanding the greatest diversity of age, country, and religion. They do not form a sect; indeed, they are mostly ignorant of each other's existence. The Indian, Christian, and Mohammedan mystics, quietists, and ascetics are disparate in all things, only not in the inner spirit and meaning of their teachings. . . . . So much concord among such divergent peoples and times is a practical proof that theirs is not a distorted and perverted state of mind, but the expression of an essential constituent of human nature, whose rarity is due solely to its excellence.'

However many of us may disagree with the results of Schopenhauer's philosophy; however repulsive his tenets may appear, there can be but one opinion, we think, concerning his *mode* of teaching. After spending hours over a few pages of Hegel or Schelling, endeavouring (for the most part vainly) to pierce through the obscurity of their terminology, it is positively refreshing to take up a passage of Schopenhauer and find there language at once vigorous and clear; doctrines set forth so tersely and plainly that it is impossible not to understand them. He gives utterance to his tenets with no uncertain sound.

Will is, in the teaching of Schopenhauer, the underlying basis of all phenomena from the attraction of the magnetic needle to the passions and desires of mankind. All phenomena, from the lowest to the highest, may be regarded as but various manifestations of this One Omnipresent Will.

Thus we perceive that though morally, Schopenhauer may be considered atheistic, we have not erred in describing his philosophic opinions to be those of Pantheism. He is another illustration from that numerous class of thinkers who, under one form or another, have believed that All comes from One; that the whole of external nature is but the One manifesting itself in diverse ways.

The second volume of his work (or, perhaps, it might be more correct to say the second edition, inasmuch as he had the first volume brought out with the second in a new form) attracted little more attention from the general public than did the first; but it succeeded in bringing its author under the notice of one or two of the more learned of his countrymen. Amongst these must be mentioned a Dr. Julius Frauenstädt, who penned a very laudatory notice of the book, and afterwards craved for the honour of an acquaintance with its author: a compliment that was dearly prized by the unfortunate Schopenhauer who, it must be confessed, after twenty-four years of non-appreciation and neglect, was greatly in want of a little acknowledgment. He was encouraged therefore to bring out two volumes of minor essays, written in a more popular manner, entitled 'Parerga and Paralipomena'; and which, from their absence of abstruseness, he hoped might be more acceptable to the general reader. But here again he had to encounter some difficulty in procuring a publisher for his work; for nothing—not even for the deliverance in its birth of a much loved work unto which he had sacrificed years of mental labour—would induce him to speculate with his own money in order to publish on his own account. So that in 1850 he had to write to Frauenstädt:—

'My *opera mixta* are finished, after six years' daily work, now it is *manum de tabula!* and I cannot find a publisher. . . . The circumstance is vexatious, not humiliating; for the papers announce that Lola Montes intends to write her memoirs, and English publishers have immediately offered her large sums. So we know what we are about. But I really do not know what more I can do, and whether my *opera mixta* are not destined to be posthumous, when there will be no want of publishers. Meanwhile, I am really writing to-day, to ask if you, my true Theophrastus and Metrodorus, will try to hunt up a publisher for me among the many booksellers in Berlin.'

After many attempts, Dr. Frauenstädt succeeded in finding a publisher, and late in the year 1851 the 'Parerga and Paralipomena' saw the light.

'I am right glad,' Schopenhauer wrote, 'to witness the birth of my last child, which completes my mission in this world. I really feel as if a load, that I have borne since my twenty-fourth year, and that has weighed heavily upon me, had been lifted from my shoulder.'

These minor essays managed to attract from the general public a notice which his more important work had failed to obtain. They dealt with a variety of subjects, all of which were more or less likely to be popular:—Apparitions, somnambulism, suicide, authorship, fame, &c. The first review gave him keen pleasure. 'It is laudatory throughout,' he wrote, 'almost enthusiastic, and very well put together.'

It is a trite saying that 'nothing is so successful as success;' but its triteness does not take away from the truth of the remark. People at last began to enquire who this Arthur Schopenhauer, this author of these brilliant essays entitled 'Parerga and Paralipomena,' could be. Was he the writer of any other works? Yes, of a great system of philosophy, written more than thirty years ago, mouldering away in neglect, through the caprice or folly of a public too indolent to read him. There was a sudden

rush for the book; and the work which had lingered so long in its first edition that the publisher, after a twenty-four years' expectation, at last in despair destroyed the remaining copies, now quickly reached its third edition. This time Schopenhauer had not to entreat the publishers to take charge of his work. They came forward of their own accord, volunteering to give him an honorarium if they might only have the honour of bringing it out. 'I am actually making money in my old age,' he remarked, almost with boyish glee, as he watched with delight the appreciation for which he had so impatiently longed, at last arriving.

True, he was now verging on his seventies, but he had a theory that a hundred years is in reality the natural life of a man; so he still looked forward to thirty years of existence wherein he might enjoy the delights of applause. He caused every scrap that was written about himself or his works to be sent to him, over which he gloated with a puerile vanity that was marvellous in so great a thinker.

His little band of disciples grew; and it would be scarcely too much to say that the greater portion of cultivated Germany united in rendering to the man whom they had so long neglected a homage that was almost idolatrous. Indeed, his admirers were not confined to his own nation. From all parts of cultivated Europe he could enumerate adherents to his system. Many would come from a distance even to boast of having seen him. He grew more amiable and accessible, and it was evident Prosperity was a more wholesome soil for him than was Adversity, although he could not help sneering at times at the intense adulation he nevertheless received with such evident delight. 'After one has spent a long life in insignificance and disregard,' he remarked to one of his acquaintances, 'they come at the end with drums and trumpets, and think that is something.'

In 1853 Schopenhauer's portrait was painted in oil and

attracted much attention at the Frankfort Exhibition. Another disciple had his portrait painted and placed in a room like a chapel. He was entreated by yet another to found a trust for the purpose of keeping watch that no syllable of his works should ever be altered.

'The growth of fame follows the laws of conflagration,' remarked the subject of all this adulation, with great delight, 'it does not proceed in arithmetical, but in geometrical or even cubical, ratio.'

Even his contempt for female intellect began to waver when he found that there existed a woman who not only was desirous of taking his bust, but was actually capable of executing her desire.

'Perhaps you know the sculptress Ney;' he wrote to a friend, 'if not, you have lost a great deal. I never thought there could exist so charming a girl. She came from Berlin at the beginning of October last, to take my bust, and it is so well done and so very like that everyone admires it; and a sculptor has said that none of the artists here could have done it so well.'

Schopenhauer did not live to attain the hundred years of life he so much desired. One day in April, as he was hurrying homewards after dinner with his accustomed rapid stride, he was overtaken with palpitations and shortness of breath. These uncomfortable sensations recurred throughout the summer, and in August he became very seriously ill; but he would take no medicines, for which he had an aversion. On September 9 his illness was pronounced by the physician to be inflammation of the lungs. He rallied for a short time, but on September 20 was seized, when rising, with such a violent spasm that he fell down and hurt his forehead. Throughout the day, however, he was better and slept well that night. Next morning he rose as usual, took his cold bath and breakfasted. A few minutes after the physician entered and found Schopenhauer dead, leaning back in a corner of the bed. He had

always wished to die suddenly and without witnesses. 'Whoever has been alone all through life must understand that solitary business better than others,' he declared.

So, on September 21, 1860, passed away peacefully and painlessly, a life, which throughout the greater portion of its duration, must be pronounced to have been a most unhappy one. Viewed impartially, it may be conceded, we think, that Schopenhauer, both by natural character as well as by education, was a man who claims our compassion more than our condemnation. He was endowed by nature with an intense inclination to pessimism, combined with a morbid craving after the admiration of others. And just at that important juncture of life when boyhood is merging into manhood, he had the misfortune to lose the parent who, by his calm practical sense, no less than by the affection he inspired in his son, was the only one who could in any way have thwarted or guided these natural tendencies. Still greater misfortune was it for him that the slight and somewhat selfish character of his remaining parent should have inspired him with a contempt for the entire female sex. For Arthur Schopenhauer both by his vanity and his craving for companionship, seems to us to have been one to whom the society of an intellectual mother, or still better, an intellectual wife, would have been of invaluable service. He was too haughty, too egoistic to brook interference from an intellectual equal, which, in all probability, a masculine admirer would have been. The feminine intellect, despite all the asseverations of the shrieking sisterhood, is inferior to the masculine; and though the exceptional woman may equal, or occasionally surpass the average man, she never equals the exceptional man. Highly endowed by nature with receptive faculties, which may have been improved to the very utmost by training and cultivation, the best woman may be capable of appreciating and comprehending the best man; but it is rarely if ever she can originate or supplement what he has

left undone. Yet both by what it possesses and what it lacks, feminine companionship of the nobler sort would have been peculiarly fitted for the solace and encouragement of such a one as Schopenhauer during the dreary years of his non-appreciation. This companionship, however, he was denied. He confessed once that he was terribly lonely. It was his misfortune, he pleaded, not his fault. He was too much above the common throng to have any sympathy with them; and he had never met with any mental equal who could understand or appreciate him, save Goethe and one or two of that generation, who were divided from him by an interval of some thirty or forty years.

And unfortunately for Schopenhauer, he was so far unlike other men of his mental culture, in that he could not find sufficient companionship in himself. He was not one of those who could truly say they were never less alone than when alone. He owns that he envies such a one as Descartes, for instance, who was so absorbed in his studies that he cared as little for applause as for society. 'As that country is the happiest which needs few or no imports, so also the man whose inner wealth suffices him, and who requires little or nothing from without.' 'Every man must therefore be the best and most to himself; the more this is the case, and the more he thus finds the sources of enjoyment in himself, the happier he will be.'

Yet notwithstanding his wounded vanity or his intense loneliness, Schopenhauer never swerved from what he conceived to be his mission in life. He was sent into the world, he believed, for an especial work; and to this work he adhered manfully, perseveringly, though cheered by no encouragement or reward. His work, as he conceived it, was to preach the doctrine of the Unity of the Universe; and he did preach it throughout the whole of his long life. He was aware that he was by no means the originator of this doctrine. His love for the Oriental philosophers came

from his recognition of the fact that their writings were imbued with the same spirit that pervaded his own. Nay, that same spirit, as he perceived, might be found, in more or less degree, in almost every philosophy that has ever appeared. 'Not only in the Vedas, in Plato, and Kant, the living matter of Bruno, Glisson, and Spinoza, the slumbering monads of Leibnitz, but throughout in all philosophies, the oldest and the newest. Yet always in the most varied dress, interwoven with absurdities that strike the eye, in the most grotesque shapes, in which one can only recognise them by careful scrutiny. . . . I confess, however, that I do not believe my teaching could ever have arisen before the Upanishads, Plato, and Kant could throw their light combined into men's minds. But truly, as Diderot says, many columns have stood, and the sun shone on them all, yet only Memnon's sang.'

Nevertheless, Schopenhauer contended somewhat passionately, though with undoubted truth, he was an original preacher. He was not merely a builder upon foundations other men had laid.

'Others,' he proudly declares, 'have asserted the Will's freedom, I prove its omnipotence.'

'My age, after the teaching of Bruno, Spinoza, and Schelling had perfectly understood that all things are but One: but the nature of this Unity, and the rationale of its appearance as Plurality, were reserved for me to explain.'

When questioned as to the value of his writings; what useful purpose they could possibly serve; or what was the good of his devoting the whole of his life to so unprofitable a pursuit; he would remind his hearers that man does not live by bread alone, but that something more than mere utility should be the aim of human existence.

'Just because genius consists in the free service of the intellect, emancipated from the service of the Will, its productions can serve no useful purposes, whether music, philosophy, painting, or poetry; it is their patent of no-

bility. All other human works exist for the maintenance or convenience of existence, only not those in question. They alone exist for themselves, and are in this sense to be regarded as the blossom, the real produce of existence. Therefore, in enjoying them, our hearts expand, for we rise above the heavy, earthy atmosphere of needs. Thus we seldom see the beautiful and the useful combined: fine lofty trees bear no fruit; fruit trees are ugly little cripples; the double scented rose is barren—only the little wild scentless one is fruitful. The finest buildings are not the most useful; a temple is no dwelling-house. A man endowed with rare intellectual gifts, who is forced to follow a merely useful profession which the most ordinary person might pursue, is like a costly painted vase used as a cooking utensil. To compare useful people to geniuses is like comparing bricks to diamonds.'

We have been forced, from regard to historical truth, to write more severely of Schopenhauer than is palatable to us, seeing that he is dead and gone, and therefore no longer able to plead in his own defence. Nevertheless, despite the manifold imperfections of which his moral character was undoubtedly possessed, we may concede to him, we think, much reverence, not only for his great intellectual capability, but for the unswerving fidelity with which he served the cause that absorbed the energies of his life: a fidelity that was all the more striking inasmuch as it was in total opposition to the gratification of that vanity which was in him so predominant a characteristic. Had he been less loyal to his work, there is little doubt that this vanity would have met with its full measure of satisfaction, for Arthur Schopenhauer, unlike many who have devoted themselves to philosophy, was endowed not only with a great capability of abstract thought, but with calm practical sense and keen insight into human nature; to say nothing of the undoubted advantage of being possessed of a small private competence. These qualifications

would have rendered him singularly competent to fill those professions which are generally so much more successful than philosophy. Had he devoted himself to commerce, politics, or law, there is little doubt he would quickly have attained not only wealth, but in the two latter professions the eminence and applause that were so greatly courted by him but so long denied. Yet bitterly as he felt his disappointment, contemptible as at times were his complaints, reprehensible and petty as was his envy of such as were more fortunate than himself, temptations of disloyalty to his cause never seem for one moment to have assailed him. And although no doubt to the vulgar mind, whose only worship is success, such unswerving fidelity to an unprofitable pursuit will incite neither admiration nor reverence, but on the contrary ridicule and scorn, few, there are, we imagine, who could be interested in a sketch such as the present, and not be touched at the contemplation of the lonely man devoting his whole energy and vast intellect to a pursuit that brought him no kind of reward, neither eminence nor wealth; not even that delight in his own studies which in nobler natures more than atones for the absence of that 'social kind of notoriety which goes by the name of success.' So that, taking him all in all, we may fitly pronounce Arthur Schopenhauer to be not altogether unworthy of the funeral sermon pronounced over him by Dr. Gwinner.[1]

'The coffin of this rare man, who dwelt in our midst for a generation, and yet remained a stranger, evokes unusual reflections. None who stand here are bound to him by the sweet ties of blood; alone as he lived, he died. And yet in the presence of this dead man something tells us that he found compensation for his loneliness. When we see friend or foe descend, forsaken, into the night of death, our eyes search for a joy that may endure, and every other feeling is stilled in a burning desire to know

[1] Quoted by Miss Zimmern.

the sources of life. This ardent yearning after the knowledge of the eternal, which comes to most men only in sight of death, rarely and evanescent as a dream, was to him the constant companion of a long life. A sincere lover of Truth, who took life seriously, he shunned mere appearances from his very youth, regardless that this might isolate him from all relations, human and social. This profound, thoughtful man, in whose breast a warm heart pulsated, ran through a whole lifetime like a child angered at play—solitary, misunderstood, but true to himself. Born and educated in competence, his genius was unhampered by the burdens of this world. He was ever grateful for this great boon; his one desire was to merit it, and he was ready to renounce all that delights the heart of other men for the sake of his lofty calling. His earthly goal was long veiled to him. The laurel that now crowns his brow was only bestowed in the evening of life, but firm as a rock was rooted in his soul belief in his mission. During long years of undeserved obscurity, he never swerved an inch from his solitary lofty way; he waxed grey in the hard service of the coy beloved he had chosen, mindful of the saying written in the Book of Esdras: 'Great is Truth, and mighty above all things.'

CHAPTER XIV.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL AND SCIENTIFIC ASPECTS OF PANTHEISM.

'To discuss God apart from Nature,' says Goethe,[1] 'is both difficult and perilous; it is as if we separated the soul from the body. We know the soul only through the medium of the body, and God only through Nature. Hence the absurdity, as it appears to me, of accusing those of absurdity who philosophically have united God with the world. For everything which exists necessarily pertains to the essence of God, because God is the one Being whose existence includes all things. Nor does the Holy Scripture contradict this, although we differently interpret its dogmas, each according to his views. All antiquity thought in the same way, an unanimity which to me has great significance. To me the judgment of so many men speaks highly for the rationality of the doctrine of emanation.'

In this our brief and now nearly-completed sketch we have necessarily been obliged to confine ourselves alone to the most striking exponents of the doctrine of Pantheism. In that numerous class of men—those who are not philosophers pure and simple—we have frequently allowed one isolated example to represent his whole class; we have, for instance, selected but one pantheistic divine, Berkeley; one pantheistic dramatist, Lessing. We have scarcely touched upon the Pantheism so strongly depicted by the Holy

[1] Lewes' 'Life of Goethe,' pp. 72, 73.

Scriptures, neither have we alluded to the poets of Pantheism, although it would be scarcely too much to say, there is not one really philosophical poet who does not display its tenets to a very marked extent. Nevertheless, in spite of all our omissions, we have, we imagine, selected enough illustrations to demonstrate to our readers that the belief in the doctrines of Pantheism has been, almost from time immemorial, a very wide one. Alike in the religious books of the Hindoos, the Vedas, and in their philosophical, the Vedanta; in the crude speculations of the early Greek philosophers, as in the more advanced speculations of the Alexandrian and Arabian thinkers; in the theosophy of Neo-Platonism, as in the mysticism of German Transcendentalism; in the scientific opinion of a Bruno, as in the logical ratiocination of a Spinoza; in the optimism of a Leibnitz as in the pessimism of a Schopenhauer; Pantheism is the keynote of all their philosophies, the one doctrine of which they were all, though in various degrees, exponents. If there is any truth in that pregnant saying of Novalis—'My belief has gained infinitely to me from the moment when one other human being has begun to believe the same'—then the unanimity of so many thinkers, separated alike by time, race, and religion, separated by every habit and every doctrine save this one, make this single point of resemblance singularly suggestive. If we subtract that very large majority of professed religious believers—those who merely acquiesce without examination in the doctrines in which they have been educated—it may well be doubted whether any single doctrine can count so many witnesses to its truth as that of Pantheism. Certainly the only one which can at all numerically approach it is Agnosticism, and even its believers frequently, perhaps almost unconsciously, imply a belief in Pantheism. There is constant allusion to the One Pervading Reality which underlies all phenomena; to the One Unknown and Unknowable substratum of which external nature is merely its

manifestation. Perfectly consistent Agnosticism would doubt whether there were a Reality at all; it would not take it for granted. In the present day Pantheism, either conscious or unconscious, shares—but with a very large majority—with Agnosticism the best intellects of the day. Atheism is on all sides repudiated. To declare there is no God is pronounced to be as unphilosophical as to declare there are a plurality of gods. That the universe is the product of a blind mechanism is pronounced to be not merely an equally, but a far more, unsatisfactory solution of the mystery in which we live, than that it is the manifestation of an intelligent Will. Our most cautious philosophers refuse to give an opinion at all upon the nature of God or of Being; yet they admit that if there be a God, we can only become acquainted with Him through a previous acquaintance with His works. Our most illustrious metaphysicians, even while they are exposing the fallacy of Atheism, Pantheism, and Theism alike, are yet obliged to postulate as the First Cause, the Unknowable Reality of which Nature is the substantial manifestation.

I do not quarrel with these words. In this transitory world, with its constant changes, its fleeting appearances and hollow deceptions, I know no more consoling conception of the First Cause than that of a *Reality*. In all the numberless titles, personal and impersonal, God has received from the lips of those who are yearning for some acquaintance with Him, I do not think He has received one so noble or so comprehensive. Yet it is difficult for me to understand how the author of such a conception should repudiate the doctrine of Pantheism. For surely if Pantheism have any meaning at all it has that implied by a belief in a Reality of which Nature is the substantial manifestation.

'Common Sense,' says Mr. Herbert Spencer,[1] 'asserts the existence of a Reality; Objective Science proves that

[1] 'First Principles,' pp. 99–108.

this Reality cannot be what we think it; Subjective Science shows why we cannot think of it as it is, and yet are compelled to think of it as existing; and in this assertion of a Reality utterly inscrutable in nature, Religion finds an assertion essentially coinciding with her own. We are obliged to regard every phenomenon as a manifestation of some Power by which we are acted upon; though Omnipresence is unthinkable, yet, as experience discloses no bounds to the diffusion of phenomena, we are unable to think of limits to the presence of this Power; while the criticisms of Science teach us that this Power is Incomprehensible. And this consciousness of an Incomprehensible Power, called Omnipresent from inability to assign its limits, is just that consciousness on which Religion dwells.

. . . 'In Religion let us recognise the high merit that from the beginning it has dimly discerned the ultimate verity, and has never ceased to insist upon it. In its earliest and crudest forms it manifested, however vaguely and inconsistently, an intuition forming the germ of this highest belief in which all philosophies finally unite. The consciousness of a mystery is traceable in the rudest fetishism.

. . . 'For its essentially valid belief Religion has constantly done battle. Gross as were the disguises under which it first espoused this belief, and cherishing this belief, though it still is, under disfiguring vestments, it has never ceased to maintain and defend it. It has everywhere established and propagated one or other modification of the doctrine that all things are manifestations of a Power that transcends our knowledge. . . . To this conviction its adherence has been substantially sincere; and for the guardianship and diffusion of it Humanity has ever been, and must ever be, its debtor.

'But while from the beginning Religion has had the all-essential office of preventing men from being wholly absorbed in the relative or immediate, and of awakening

them to a consciousness of something beyond it, this office has been but very imperfectly discharged. Religion has ever been more or less irreligious, and it continues to be partially irreligious even now. In the first place, as implied above, it has all along professed to have some knowledge of that which transcends knowledge, and has so contradicted its own teachings. While with one breath it has asserted that the Cause of all things passes understanding, it has, with the next breath, asserted that the Cause of all things possesses such and such attributes—can be in so far understood. In the second place, while in great part sincere in its fealty to the great truth it has to uphold, it has often been insincere, and consequently irreligious, in maintaining the untenable doctrines by which it has obscured this great truth. Each assertion respecting the nature, acts, or motives of that Power which the Universe manifests to us, has been repeatedly called in question, and proved to be inconsistent with itself, or with accompanying assertions. Yet each of them has been age after age insisted on, in spite of a secret consciousness that it would not bear examination. Just as though unaware that its central position was impregnable, Religion has obstinately held every outpost long after it was obviously indefensible. And this naturally introduces us to the third and most serious form of irreligion which Religion has displayed, namely, an imperfect belief in that which it specially professes to believe. How truly its central position *is* impregnable, Religion has never adequately realised. In the devoutest faith as we see it, there lies hidden an innermost core of scepticism, and it is this scepticism which causes that dread of inquiry displayed by Religion when face to face with Science. . . . The truly religious element of Religion has always been good; that which has proved untenable in doctrine and vicious in practice, has been its irreligious element, and from this it has ever been undergoing purification.

'And now, observe that all along, the agent which has effected the purification has been Science. We habitually overlook the fact that this has been one of its functions. Religion ignores its immense debt to Science; and Science is scarcely at all conscious how much Religion owes it. Yet it is demonstrable that every step by which Religion has progressed from its first low conception to the comparatively high one it has now reached, Science has helped it, or rather forced it, to take; and that even now Science is urging further steps in the same direction.

'Using Science in its true sense, as comprehending all positive and definite knowledge of the order existing among surrounding phenomena, it becomes manifest that from the outset the discovery of an established order has modified that conception of disorder, or undetermined order, which underlies every superstition. As fast as experience proves that certain familiar changes always happen in the same sequence, there begins to fade from the mind the conception of a special personality to whose variable will they were before ascribed. And when, step by step, accumulating observations do the like with the less familiar changes, a similar modification of belief takes place with respect to them.

'While this process seems to those who effect, and those who undergo it, an anti-religious one, it is really the reverse. . . . There arise two antithetical states of mind, answering to the opposite sides of that existence about which we think. While our consciousness of Nature under the one aspect constitutes Science, our consciousness of it under the other aspect constitutes Religion.

. . . 'Religion and' Science are therefore necessary correlatives. As already hinted, they stand respectively for those two antithetical modes of consciousness which cannot exist asunder. A known cannot be thought of apart from an unknown; nor can an unknown be thought of apart from a known. And by consequence neither can

become more distinct without giving greater distinctness to the other. To carry further a metaphor before used—they are the positive and negative poles of thought; of which neither can gain in intensity without increasing the intensity of the other.

'Thus the consciousness of an Inscrutable Power manifested to us through all phenomena, has been growing ever clearer, and must eventually be freed from its imperfections. The certainty that on the one hand such a Power exists, while on the other hand its nature transcends intuition and is beyond imagination, is the certainty towards which intelligence has from the first been progressing. To this conclusion Science inevitably arrives as it reaches its confines, while to this conclusion Religion is irresistibly driven by criticism. And satisfying as it does the demands of the most rigorous logic at the same time that it gives the religious sentiment the widest possible sphere of action, it is the conclusion we are bound to accept without reserve or qualification.'

And if Religion and Science are but two aspects of the One Inscrutable Power that manifests itself in all phenomena, so likewise must Matter and Mind be equally considered as two other aspects of this same All-pervading Power. In the words of the illustrious philosopher from whom I have already quoted—

'We can think of Matter only in terms of Mind: we can think of Mind only in terms of Matter. When we have pushed our explorations of the first to the uttermost limit, we are referred to the second for a final answer; and when we have got the final answer of the second we are referred back to the first for an interpretation of it. We find the value of x in terms of y, then we find the value of y in terms of x, and so on we may continue for ever, without coming nearer to a solution. The antithesis of subject and object, never to be transcended while con-

sciousness lasts, renders impossible all knowledge of the Ultimate Reality in which subject and object are united.

'And this brings us to the true conclusion implied throughout the foregoing pages—the conclusion that it is the one and the same Ultimate Reality which is manifested to us subjectively and objectively. For while the nature of that which is manifested under either form proves to be inscrutable, the order of its manifestations throughout all mental phenomena proves to be the same as the order of its manifestations throughout all material phenomena.'[1]

Thus, if I read Mr. Spencer aright, all Matter and all Mind; all Religion and all Science; in a word, the whole of mental, moral, and material phenomena are in his opinion but the various manifestations of the great incomprehensible Unity that runs through all.

And this brings me to another subject upon which I slightly touched in the First Volume of this sketch,[2] the Correlation of the Physical Forces. Familiar though I now am with this doctrine, and firmly as I accept it as a truth, the fact of this transformation and equivalence of the Forces never ceases to fill me with amazement. It seems to me so marvellous to find myself compelled to believe by overwhelming proof that Heat, that Light, that Sound, that Colour, even that Thought, are but different manifestations of the one Force, Motion; that Heat is invisible Light as Light is visible Heat; that all Light is the result of ethereal undulations impinging on the eye. That the slower the vibration, the longer is the wave; the more frequent the vibration, the shorter is the wave; and that on the length of these waves depends our sensation of colour. That though marvellous is the rapidity with which human thought travels, competent authorities have found by accurate measurement that the speed of light is many millions of times more rapid. Very wonderful also does it

[1] 'Principles of Psychology,' by Herbert Spencer, vol. i. p. 627.

[2] Vol. i. pp. 204–211.

seem to me that I am forced to believe in the indestructibility of Matter. Men and animals and plants are born, and beget their young, and die. Statistics declare that the world is more thickly populated than in the earlier ages; yet there has been no creation, only a transformation. Matter decomposes and recombines. As it was in the beginning, so it is now. There is no new thing under the sun. As Empedocles told us long ago—

No natural birth
Is there of mortal things, nor death's destruction final;
Nothing is there but a mingling, and then a separation of the mingled,
Which are called a birth and death by ignorant mortals.

Every atom of the universe continues to exist, and must exist as in the beginning. Every consequent is but the product of its antecedent. Every antecedent must have its equivalent consequent. As Professor Tyndall says:—[1]

'The vegetable world, though drawing almost all its nutriment from invisible sources, was proved incompetent to generate anew either matter or force. Its matter is for the most part transmuted gas; its force transformed solar force. The animal world was proved to be equally uncreative, all its motive energies being referred to the combustion of its food. The activity of each animal as a whole was proved to be the transferred activity of its molecules. The muscles were shown to be stores of mechanical force, potential until unlocked by the nerves, and then resulting in muscular contractions. The speed at which messages fly to and fro along the nerves was determined and found to be, not as had been previously supposed, equal to that of light or electricity, but less than the speed of a flying eagle."

Changes, and the accompanying transformations of forces, are everywhere in progress, from the movement of the stars to the currents of our thoughts. But all these

[1] 'Belfast Address,' p. 46.

so-wonderful changes are but changes of form alone, and not of substance. 'For all causation,' as Mr. Lewes has told us,[1] 'is but "immanent change."' Substance is ever the same, neither increasing nor decreasing, remaining always invariable in its quantity. However strange may be its transformations, however wonderful its metamorphoses, it is sure to return sooner or later into that from whence it came. As Goethe says, in his 'Metamorphosis of Animals:'—

'All members develop themselves according to eternal laws,
And the rarest form mysteriously preserves the primitive type,
Form therefore determines the animal's way of life,
And in turn the way of life powerfully reacts upon all form.
Thus the orderly growth of form is seen to hold,
Whilst yielding to change from eternally acting causes.'

And as Dr. Draper says:[2]—

'A particle of water raised from the sea may ascend invisibly through the air, it may float above us in the cloud, it may fall in the rain-drop, sink into the earth, gush forth again into the fountain, enter the rootlets of a plant, rise up with the sap to the leaves, be there decomposed by the sunlight into its constituent elements, its oxygen and hydrogen; of these and other elements, acids and oils, and various organic compounds may be made: in these or in its undecomposed state it may be received in the food of animals, circulate in their blood, be essentially concerned in acts of intellection; executed by the brain, it may be expired in the breath. Though shed in the tear in moments of despair, it may give birth to the rainbow, the emblem of hope. Whatever the course through which it has passed, whatever mutations it has undergone, whatever the force it has submitted to, its elementary constituents endure. Not only have they not been annihilated, they have not even been changed; and in a period of time, long

[1] 'Problems of Life and Mind,' vol. i. p. 360.
[2] 'Intellectual Development of Europe,' vol. ii. pp. 375, 376.

or short, they find their way as water back again to the sea from whence they came.'

It has been well said by a great living scientist that the more a man of science investigates the secrets of Nature the more does he marvel at them and the less is he astonished. I suppose by this is meant his previous knowledge of Nature being already so great, his appreciation of her beauties so intense, no future discovery he can make about her causes him surprise or increases his admiration by one jot or tittle. Yet the more he ponders over her mysteries, the more inexplicable does he feel to be the solution. To him, with his practised intellect and stored-up knowledge, the drop of water or the simplest moss is as wonderful in its essence and perplexes him as greatly as do the most startling phenomena, such as tempests, eclipses, deaths.

But with uncultured man all this is reversed. The familiarity of sameness fills him with indifference. To the savage mind, as to the uncultured in our own day, possession always is tantamount to possession not at all. They seldom prize a thing until they miss it; and possibly the sun himself would cause them no astonishment or delight did he not flee away at night and leave them to the gloom of darkness. That an apple falls to the ground or that a man is capable of standing upright causes no perplexity to the mind of the savage or the child; they evoke as little astonishment in them as in the elephant or the horse. How should they indeed? The earliest savages in their primitive and lowest stage of barbarism, equally with children during their first years of life, differ little, if at all, from the higher mammalia in their capability of abstraction. Man, as everything else in Nature, has to advance from the simple to the complex, from the lower to the higher. At first he is but a creature crawling upon the earth, absorbed in the pursuits necessary for the satisfaction of his animal desires and animal necessities. He seeks Pleasure; he

avoids Pain; but as yet the sentiments of Happiness or Grief, of Wonder or Surprise, are foreign to him.

I have often thought that the great step which marks the differentiation of the human from the animal is the possession of Language; yet we must remember that even this possession, marvellous as it is, is but a gradual acquisition, not a miraculous endowment. Language in the race, as in the individual, commences with monosyllables or with imitation of the cries of various animals, yet when once it is evolved even into its crudest form the progress of the human mind must differentiate from that of the animal in geometrical rather than in arithmetical ratio. 'As language arises,' says Steinthal,[1] 'mind originates.' And as Geiger writes:[2] 'Language created reason; before language man was irrational.' It is the acquisition of speech which is the origin of the apparently impassable gulf which distinguishes the lowest human intelligence from the highest animal. Without Language man could have no idea of God, of Duty, of Religion. Signs and cries may fitly describe concrete objects; they would be powerless to represent abstract thought.

So that man alone, of all the sentient creatures, differs from them in that as soon as he emerges from the lowest stage of barbarism nearly akin to animalism, reflection forces itself upon him. He alone of all the animals is unable to wholly satisfy himself with animal gratifications. In Instincts, in the Senses, nay, even in what seems like Intelligence, he is equalled, sometimes indeed surpassed, by many of them. The governments even of the higher savages do not for the most part equal in order or in forethought those of ants or bees. He differs from these, not by his superior industry or patience or obedience, but by his inability to remain satisfied with the relative or immediate. Not enough for him is it to know that spring

[1] 'Der Ursprung der Sprache.'
[2] 'Der Ursprung der Sprache,' p. 37.

is the seed-time or autumn the harvest-time; he longs to know what makes it so. It is not enough for him that the rain encourages the fruits of his toil and the hail destroys it; he longs to know whence and why they come and who made them. Man is the only animal that cannot live by bread alone. The Thunder and Lightning do not merely terrify him, they amaze him and strike him with awe; sometimes, according to his temperament, they enrage him and incite him to a futile feeling of revenge. The flowers and fruits, the fragrant air of balmy summer, do not merely fill him with a sensuous half-conscious feeling of delight, they evoke his gratitude. Upon whom shall he vent his displeasure? unto whom shall he yield his adoration?

From the earliest dawn of intelligence two answers have variously been offered as a solution of the mystery which surrounds us:—Creation by external agency, and Self-Existence or Universal Immanence. Each of these answers has two forms. External agency may be Polytheism or Monotheism; Self-Existence may be Pantheism or Atheism. Uncultured humanity almost invariably selects the polytheistic form of external agency as a solution of the enigma. And naturally so; nay, necessarily so. How could rude man, unacquainted with acoustics, solve the riddle of the Echo, save by imagining some anthropomorphic being was imitating or mocking him? How could he account for sudden deaths, for blights, for inundations, save by imagining he was an object of dislike to some malignant Being of more than earthly capability? How could he do otherwise than infer that the young and abundant corn, which promised so good a harvest, and the lightning and hail which but too effectually blighted that promise, were the workmanship of two different Beings? Surely it was natural for him to endeavour to mollify the one by abasement or by gifts, and to encourage the other by gratitude and adoration. Thus it came to pass that gradually and almost imperceptibly every natural object

grew to be endowed with its presiding genius—a good or bad spirit as occasion seemed to require.

In the childhood of every religion in the world we see the same ideas disclosing themselves. Every good or bad object in nature is supposed to have some immediate relation to human beings. In the lower religions gods and goddesses rule over the destinies of men more in caprice than from any definite purpose. In the higher religions all misfortune is supposed to be evil purposely sent as a just chastisement for man's unrighteousness; and, conversely, good fortune is the just reward of righteousness performed. What are these storms of thunder? They are the terrific weapons of the mighty Thor, who is hurling his bolts at erring man. Whence comes this abundant harvest and glorious summer? They are the benignant and approving gifts of the goddess Ceres. Nay, even when man grew capable of a lower species of Monotheism, the same interpretation of nature is to be remarked. What and whence is this rainbow that so suddenly adorns the heavens after a sunny shower? It is a loving signal sent direct from God as an assurance that He does not intend to destroy the world a second time by water. Nevertheless, as might naturally be inferred, this interpretation of nature occurs more frequently in Polytheism than in Monotheism, even in its lower forms. Everything in the world is by Polytheism supposed to be created for the evil or the good of man, and man for the service of the gods.

But as man emerges from this primary and lowest stage of religion, as he becomes alive to the fact that one all-powerful and omniscient Ruler of men and of things is a worthier object of adoration than are a multitude of divinities of small and limited power, all hating and warring against each other, he gradually arrives at the conception of Monotheism. This conception alone at once marks an immense development in his spiritual nature; although it must be admitted it has disclosed itself in a variety of

ways, from a comparatively low conception to an almost ideally high one. It may take the form of slavish submission to a supposed spiritual sovereign, who is more powerful, but by no means more adorable, than a human despotic being, and who equally requires propitiation by gifts and flattery, or by remonstrance. Or it may disclose itself in language so lofty and pure that we can designate it by no other name than sublime. Witness the oft-quoted passage of St. Augustine when he was emerging from his Pantheistic stage to that of Monotheism:[1]

'I asked the earth, and it said, "I am not He;" and all that is upon it made the same confession. I asked the sea and the depths, and the creeping things that have life, and they answered: "We are not thy God; look thou above us." I asked the breezes and the gales; and the whole air, with its inhabitants, said to me: "Anaximenes is in error, I am not God." I asked the heaven, the sun, the moon, the stars: "We too," said they, "are not the God whom thou seekest." And I said to all the creatures that surround the doors of my fleshly senses, "Ye have said to me of my God that ye are not He; tell me somewhat of Him." And with a great voice they exclaimed, "He made us!"'

Not even Pantheism itself could arrive at a more sublime conception of God than this monotheistic conception of St. Augustine's. The highest Monotheism does not so much yield to Pantheism through the greater sublimity of the latter, as because it is less capable of verification. Had there been no such thing as Science, that great leavener of religion, it may well be questioned whether man, after he had once arrived at the conception of Monotheism, could possibly have been subjected to any doubts as to the correctness of his solution. Pantheism is supplanting Monotheism, not because of its greater sublimity, but because of its greater capability of verification.

[1] S. Aug. Conf. x. 6.

Monotheism, in the ordinary sense of that word, or the doctrine of a Personal Extra-Mundane God, invariably presupposes creation; but Science is beginning to throw the gravest doubts upon the doctrine of creation. It has been irresistibly proved that as long as the Universe (as far, at all events, as we know it) has existed, not an atom has been produced or destroyed. Moreover, theistic believers are scarcely conscious how inextricably woven is their doctrine of a Personal God with that of a local heaven. Almost imperceptibly to themselves, that doctrine exhibits itself in the hypothesis of a Mighty Personal Being seated on a throne in heaven surrounded by the adoring spirits of the just made perfect. But, alas for its believers! that peaceful sky above us which they have so fondly imagined to be the floor of heaven is but illimitable space filled with an infinitely subtle matter whose particles are seething and surging, like the waves of an angry sea, with here and there, scattered in seemingly infinite profusion, planets and stars and systems of stars, all of which are in a ceaseless state of contraction and expansion; some in their youth, others in their maturity; some again in their decay or temporary death, awaiting with tolerable certainty another birth. What then becomes of the doctrines of a local Heaven or a Personal God?

There remains therefore the conception of Pantheism and of Atheism to be discussed. The latter hypothesis indeed will not occupy us very greatly. It is self-refutable on the face of it. For Atheism may be termed Materialism in its naked and not its transcendental sense. If then Man, the highest form of Matter, is unable to create or annihilate his component parts, how is it likely that any lower form of matter should have this marvellous power? Materialism in its transcendental sense may indeed be imagined to be Universal Existence without beginning or end, but then this form of materialism is in reality Pantheism;

for it declares that all matter is but the external manifestation of the Reality that underlies it all.

And as Pantheism is, of all the religious solutions, the most in accordance with scientific discoveries, so will it be found to be not the least in accordance with the religious instinct that pervades the heart of every earnest man. It has been well said by a Christian, and eminently non-pantheistic writer,[1] that 'the great attraction and strength of Pantheism lies in the satisfaction which it professes to offer to one very deep and legitimate aspiration; it endeavours to assure man of his real union with the source of his own and the universal life. It is this profound idea, this most fascinating allurement, that can alone explain the empire, which in various ages and under various forms, Pantheism has wielded in human history. It inspires Eleatic and Indian philosophies; it is the animating principle of such worship of the generative and life-sustaining powers in nature, as was, for instance, that of the Phœnician Baalim. Since Lessing, Spinoza has almost reigned in certain districts of cultivated Europe, and Germany is by no means the only home of the thought of Schelling and of Hegel. In its later forms Pantheism is, speaking historically, a reaction from and a protest against the older Rationalistic Deism. It often presents a noble plea that God shall not be banished by modern thought from all real contact with humanity; nay, it would fain essay to do in its way what the divine Incarnation has actually done, it would make men partakers of the Divine Nature. And this, its religious aim, is beyond question a main secret of its power.'

Undoubtedly this satisfaction which it yields to the nobler aspirations of man is one great explanation of the almost universal (though often unconscious) existence of Pantheism in the hearts of the more cultivated races as of the more thoughtful men of all nations. Nor must we

[1] 'Elements of Religion,' by Canon Liddon, p. 64.

forget to remark that if Science is at last beginning to prove to us beyond the possibility of contradiction the identity of man with all other forms of existence whether organic or inorganic, Poetry has for ages been conscious of this identity, although she has been obliged to content herself with preaching that which Science is at last beginning to declare capable of proof. As says Shelley, (to take no older examples),

> Infinity within
> Infinity without, belie creation;
> The interminable spirit it contains
> Is nature's only God.'

And Emerson announces his belief in his own brotherhood even with the flowers by the beautiful verse,

> Why thou wert there, O rival of the rose,
> I never thought to ask, I never knew,
> But in my simple ignorance suppose
> The self-same Power that brought me here brought you.

But another argument for the truth of Pantheism lies in the fact, that it is eminently the offspring of a matured and cultivated conception of the universe, not of an immature or uncultivated one. As Mr. Spencer has well remarked[1] 'Early ideas are not usually true ideas. Undeveloped intellect, be it that of an individual or that of the race, forms conclusions which require to be revised and re-revised before they reach a tolerable correspondence with realities. Were it otherwise, there would be no discovery, no increase of intelligence. What we call the progress of knowledge, is the bringing of Thoughts into harmony with Things; and it implies that the first Thoughts are either wholly out of harmony with Things, or in very incomplete harmony with them.'

Other things equal the mere fact that certain conceptions are the product of immaturity, whether in the race or the individual, affords in itself a strong probability that

[1] 'Principles of Biology,' vol. i. p. 333.

such conceptions are erroneous. And *cæteris paribus* the fact, that Polytheism is invariably the product of a low culture would make it yield in probability to Monotheism, which is the product of a relatively high culture; and Monotheism in its turn is yielding to Pantheism, as mankind attains by degrees a still higher order of intelligence. Although it is true we may never reach absolute truth, every increase of knowledge brings about an increased attainment of approximate truth. The conception which has arisen in a late and eminently scientific century is more likely to be true than one which has arisen in an early and eminently unscientific century. And such conceptions as are the product of the exceptional and thinking few in any century or nation are more likely to be true than such as are the product of the unthinking many in the same century or nation. The doctrine of the Unity of the Universe, though it has been preached by exceptional spirits in many nations and for many centuries, has only reached the dignity of a Science in our own generation, and will not be accepted by the many until a future generation. As Haeckel has well expressed it:—

'The low dualistic conception of God corresponds with a low animal stage of development of the human organism. The more developed man of the present day is capable of, and justified in, conceiving that infinitely nobler and sublimer idea of God which alone is compatible with the monistic conception of the universe, and which recognises God's spirit and power in all phenomena without exception. This monistic idea of God, which belongs to the future, has already been expressed by Giordano Bruno in the following words: "A spirit exists in all things, and no body is so small but contains a part of the Divine substance within itself, by which it is animated." It is of this noble idea of God that Goethe says: "Certainly there does not exist a more beautiful worship of God than that which needs no image, but which arises in our heart from con-

verse with nature." By it we arrive at the sublime idea of the Unity of God and Nature.'[1]

Unification is the characteristic of developing thought of all kinds, and Science is at its highest when it interprets all orders of phenomena as differently-conditioned manifestations of one kind of effect, under differently-conditioned modes of one kind of uniformity. But the more we investigate into the discoveries of Science, the further removed from us appears to be the dualistic doctrine of a personal extra-mundane God on the one hand, and a perishable universe on the other. The more we know of Nature the greater grows our certainty that her operations are the product of an immanent all-pervading Power, not obedience to an anthropomorphic external mandate. If there were any truth in the doctrine of an extra-mundane Creator, every conquest and discovery of Science would open upon us fresh vistas of this truth. As civilisation advances, our perception of this doctrine ought to attain a relatively high amount of clearness. But the exact converse of all this is in reality the case. Science tells us nothing whatever of a Power outside of, and apart from, the Universe. The only proofs of such a conception are the various so-called revealed religions of the world, and these are all in greater or less degree the anthropomorphic productions of early immaturity. On the contrary, that new conception of the Universe which is gradually growing into recognition, that marvellous generalisation by which the nineteenth century will be chiefly remembered, is the conception of an exceptional mind in an exceptional century, confirmed by the unhesitating acceptance of the more thoughtful of his contemporaries. To quote Haeckel again:—

The idea of the unity of *organic and inorganic nature* is now firmly established, and that branch of natural science which had longest and most obstinately opposed

[1] 'The History of Creation,' by Ernst Haeckel, vol. i. pp. 70, 71.

mechanical conception and explanation, viz., the science of the structure of animate forms, is launched on to identically the same road towards perfection as that along which all the rest of the natural sciences are travelling. The unity of *all* natural phenomena is by Darwin's theory finally established.

'This unity of all nature, the animating of all matter, the inseparability of mental power and corporeal substance, Goethe has asserted in the words: "Matter can never exist and be active without mind, nor can mind without matter." These first principles of the mechanical conception of the universe have been taught by the great monistic philosophers of all ages. Even Democritus of Abdera, the immortal founder of the Atomic theory, clearly expressed them about 500 years before Christ; but the great Dominican friar, Giordano Bruno, did so even more explicitly. For this he was burnt at the stake, by the Christian Inquisition in Rome, on February 17, 1600, on the same day on which, thirty-six years before, Galileo, his great fellow-countryman and fellow-worker was born. Such men, who live and die for a great idea, are usually stigmatised as "Materialists;" but their opponents, whose arguments were torture and the stake, are praised as "Spiritualists."

'By the Theory of Descent we are for the first time enabled to conceive of the unity of nature in such a manner that a mechanico-causal explanation of even the most intricate organic phenomena, for example, the origin and structure of the organs of sense is no more difficult (in a general way) than is the mechanical explanation of any physical process; as, for example, earthquakes, the courses of the wind, or the currents of the ocean. We thus arrive at the extremely important conviction that *all natural bodies* which are known to us are *equally animated*, that the distinction which has been made between animate and inanimate bodies does *not* exist. When a stone is thrown

into the air, and falls to earth according to definite laws, or when in a solution of salt a crystal is formed, the phenomenon is neither more nor less a mechanical manifestation of life than the growth and flowering of plants, than the propagation of animals or the activity of their senses, than the perception or the formation of thought in man. This final triumph of the monistic conception of nature constitutes the highest and most general merit of the Theory of Descent, as reformed by Darwin.'[1]

Let us now proceed to another grand scientific generalisation of the nineteenth century, 'The Indestructibility of Matter.'

Let us ponder a little more deeply the ultimate meaning of this term 'Indestructibility of Matter.' Let us see where a belief in this doctrine, if it be a true one (and I believe it is accepted by the most enlightened minds of this generation) must inevitably lead us; to what goal it does of necessity tend.

In the first place the acceptance of this doctrine deals the final death-blow to the ancient notion of Creation, as ordinarily understood. For it teaches that as long as the entire Universe has existed it has contained precisely the same amount of matter as it at this instant contains; and that as long as the Universe will exist so will the same amount of Matter be contained therein. Experimentally, physicists tell us, it has been proved that for every apparent loss of some form of Matter there has been its relative equivalent in some other form. Theoretically, if rigorously considered, the act of creation—*i.e.* the transformation of *nothing* into *something*—is unthinkable. Not even a drop of water can be formed without the union of its constituents, hydrogen and oxygen.

What then becomes of the old notions of creation, of miracles, of divine intervention, of answers to prayers for rain, for fine weather? Pray as we may, we cannot cause

[1] 'The History of Creation,' vol. i. pp. 22, 23.

by our prayers one drop of water to be produced or to be destroyed. Mix eight pounds of oxygen with one of hydrogen, pass a spark through them, and our water instantaneously appears. In the latter case we have not caused *creation*, we have but caused *transformation*. It would be easy for us to resolve the water back into its original constituents. It would be impossible for us, either by prayer or other means, to annihilate it altogether. The time will come, I believe, (if it have not already arrived) when the doctrine of the Indestructibility of Matter will take its place side by side and in equal rank with the certainty of arithmetical or mathematical truth. Nay, to all intents and purposes, for practical everyday life, has it not already so done? If a joint of meat weigh less to-day than when we purchased it at the butcher's yesterday, do not we naturally infer that the butcher's weights were false, or that the cook has abstracted the surplus quantity? We never dream of accounting for the deficit by the hypothesis of the meat being capable of annihilation, of transformation into nothing. Men, even fairly enlightened men, are so wonderfully inconsistent in their opinions. Consciously or unconsciously a kind of logic that would be scouted in their practical life is allowed to pass by unquestioned in their religious. And the very same who repudiate with horror the notion of the Indestructibility of Matter, on account of the shock it gives to their religious belief, would acquiesce without hesitation in the ridicule that would be thrown upon the thief who would seek to explain the lightness of the sovereign or the smallness of the joint by the plea that the gold or the meat had been annihilated. All our weights and all our measures are unconscious proof of our certainty of the Indestructibility of Matter.

Yet it is only within the last two or three hundred years that there has been this certainty in the practical everyday illustrations of the Indestructibility of Matter, or in the law of Universal Causation, which may be called its

correlative. Three hundred years ago it was as difficult for the ordinary mind to believe in the universal causation of commonplace matters as it is now for the ordinary mind to believe in the universal causation of unusual phenomena. Witness the belief in witchcraft, magic, miracles, &c. Even the Greek Philosophers, not excepting Aristotle, recognised Chance and Spontaneity as among the agents in nature; in other words, they believed that to that extent there was no guarantee that the past had been similar to itself, or that the future would resemble the past. In his 'Essay on the Inductive Philosophy,' Mr. Baden Powell, speaking of the 'conviction of the universal and permanent uniformity of Nature,' makes the following remark:—

'We may remark that this idea, in its proper extent, is by no means one of popular acceptance or natural growth. Just so far as the daily experience of everyone goes, so far indeed he comes to embrace a certain persuasion of this kind, but merely to this limited extent, that what is going on around him at present, in his own narrow sphere of observation will go on in like manner in future. The peasant believes that the sun which rose to-day will rise again to-morrow; that the seed put into the ground will be followed in due time by the harvest this year, as it was last year, and the like; but has no notion of such inferences in subjects beyond his immediate observation. And it should be observed that each class of persons, in admitting this belief within the limited range of his own experience, though he doubt or deny it in everything beyond, is, in fact, bearing unconscious testimony to its universal truth. Nor, again, is it only amongst the *most* ignorant that this limitation is put upon the truth. There is a very general propensity to believe that everything beyond common experience, or especially ascertained laws of nature, is left to the dominion of chance or fate or arbitrary intervention; and even to object to any attempted

explanation by physical causes, if conjecturally thrown out for an apparently unaccountable phenomenon.

'The precise doctrine of the *generalisation* of this idea of the uniformity of Nature, so far from being obvious, natural, or intuitive, is utterly beyond the attainment of the many. In all the extent of its universality it is characteristic of the philosopher. It is clearly the result of philosophic cultivation and training, and by no means the spontaneous offspring of any primary principle naturally inherent in the mind, as some seem to believe. It is no mere vague persuasion taken up without examination, as a common prepossession to which we are always accustomed; on the contrary, all common prejudices and associations are against it. It is pre-eminently *an acquired idea*. It is not attained without deep study and reflection. The best informed philosopher is the man who most firmly believes it, even in opposition to received notions; its acceptance depends on the extent and profoundness of his inductive studies.'[1]

It has passed almost into a truism that the doctrine which in one generation is propounded and received by the intellectual *élite* alone is in the next generation a commonplace accepted by the many. Scientific truths imperceptibly filter down till they become generally received dogmas. The doctrines of the Indestructibility of Matter and of Universal Causation form no exception to this rule; and save where they interfere with the teaching of revelation (and sometimes even when they do so interfere) are acknowledged now even by the majority of the uneducated. It would be rare nowadays, I think, to find, even among the peasant class, one who believes that thunder and lightning are signs of the wrath of God; or that a comet can be frightened away by a human imprecation, or, at the best, by an appeal to God. In the next generation I believe it will be as rare to find any who believe that

[1] Quoted by Mr. Mill in his 'System of Logic,' vol. ii. pp. 99, 100.

cholera can be cured by human prayer as it is now to find any who believe that the sun can be commanded to stand still by such an agent. It will be gradually comprehended that disease is not a punishment spontaneously created, but always the effect of some antecedent cause. In contagious and infectious diseases it will be acknowledged that no such disease arises save from similar antecedent disease—that the germs of all infectious fevers may literally be called the seeds which grow into maturity whenever a fitting habitat is discovered. Even our clergymen are already beginning to understand this, and it is by no means rare to find amongst the *élite* of them a repudiation of all belief in prayer as a preventive or curative of disease.[1]

The doctrine of the Conservation of Energy (for Force is as indestructible as Matter) asserts that no power can make its appearance in nature without an equivalent expenditure of some other power. Light runs into Heat, Heat into Electricity, Electricity into Magnetism, Magnetism into Mechanical Force; and, Protean-like, Mechanical Force changes back into Light and Heat. There is conversion, but not creation. Light and Heat, in their turn, can severally be produced from the most ordinary mechanical energy. Wood can be raised by friction to the temperature of ignition; while by properly striking a piece of iron, a skilful blacksmith can cause it to glow.

Nor is it in terrestrial phenomena alone that this Conservation of Force is to be remarked. Throughout the solar system, and, as far as we can predict, throughout the sidereal also, the same law holds good. One power

[1] It is only amongst the *élite*, however. Some few years ago, when the cattle plague was raging so violently, I myself was in a church where the worthy preacher not only insisted upon the remedial efficacy of Prayer, but assured his flock that the cattle plague was the consequence of the growing non-observance in England of the sacredness of Good Friday! Obviously this reverend gentleman could have but slight acquaintance with the modern doctrine of Universal Causation.

changes into another; transformation and metamorphosis seem to be the order of the heavens as much as of the earth. Nay, if the theory of Laplace be true (and although that theory has not yet emerged from the region of hypothesis, it is an hypothesis which seems to be daily gaining ground with the most enlightened minds), the entire solar system, amounting according to modern computation, to a hundred and fifty-nine[1] bodies, was, in its original state, one vast, gigantic whole, travailing in labour before its offspring could be detached from it.

And as Comets, and Planets and their satellites have proceeded from the Sun, so, in like manner, must they return into the Sun. The speculation of Laplace supposes that the atmosphere of the Sun originally extended to the present limits of the solar system; so that at this period in its formation the Sun existed alone, the planets and their satellites remaining undeveloped in his atmosphere. But the entire mass was endowed with a movement of rotation, which forced in the same direction either the molecules of the nucleus or those of the nebulosity. At a given moment, the limits of this latter depended upon the distance at which the centrifugal force due to rotation was in equilibrium with the central force of gravitation. But since, by the general principles of mechanics, the rotation of the Sun and of its accompanying atmosphere must increase in rapidity as its volume diminishes, the increased centrifugal force, generated by the more rapid rotation, must overbalance the action of gravitation, and cause the Sun to abandon successive rings of vaporous matter, which are supposed to have condensed by cooling, and to have become the planets; while the remainder of the original Sun, by the same process of cooling, has con-

[1] This computation only takes into consideration the thirteen Comets that are *known* to belong to our Solar System. There are two hundred other Comets that are *believed* to belong to it; but they travel round the sun in orbits so elongated and in times so vast, that their return has only been approximately calculated, not positively proved by actual observation.

tracted to its present dimensions. The known laws of matter authorise us to suppose that a body which is constantly giving out so large an amount of heat as the Sun is, must be gradually cooling, and consequently contracting. These suppositions being made, it follows from known laws that successive zones of the solar atmosphere might be thrown off; that these would continue to revolve round the Sun with the same velocity as when they formed part of his substance; and that they would cool down, long before the Sun itself, to any given temperature. The known law of gravitation would then cause them to agglomerate in masses, which would assume the shape our planets actually exhibit; would acquire, each about its own axis, a rotatory movement; and would in that state revolve, as the planets actually do, about the Sun, in the same direction as the Sun's rotation, only with less velocity. The planets once formed, we can easily understand how the remaining part of the nebulæ, left after the formation of the planets, should likewise form centres, and produce the birth of new bodies gravitating and revolving round each one of them. Such is the origin of what we call Satellites. Laplace next explained why these satellites formed no more new satellites, and why these secondary bodies present the same side to the planet round which they gravitate; it is that their small distances giving to the attraction of their primary a preponderating influence, the satellites themselves, when still in a fluid state, were swollen up tide-like towards the planet; and from their rotatory movement followed a time of rotation nearly identical with that of their movement of revolution. After a certain number of revolutions, these periods become rigorously equal.

But Laplace did not rest content with mere deduction in proof of his hypothesis. He pointed to the rings of Saturn as containing actual, though, of course, only partial, inductive proof. 'The regular distribution,' he says, 'of

the mass of Saturn's rings, around its centre, and in the plane of its equator, follows naturally from this hypothesis, and without it, it must rest without explanation; these rings appear to me to be ever-present proofs of the primitive extension of the atmosphere of Saturn, and of its successive contractions.'

But now, may we not go further than this? may we not, without exceeding the limits of just hypothesis, speculate upon the probability of the fact that like as our Sun may be called the common Father of the mighty system of Comets, Planets, and their satellites which revolve around him, so, in like manner, that Sun in its turn may but be the offspring of a yet greater sun, this, again, of yet a greater, or perhaps of a system of suns, until we find that the entire Universe may have originally been one vast, gigantic, nebulous whole? Spectrum analysis has shown that certain of the stars contain substances identical with those contained in our Sun as well as in our own little earth. Thus, for instance, Sirius contains sodium, magnesium, iron, hydrogen; Vega and Pollux contain sodium, magnesium, and iron, but no hydrogen. Aldebaran, again, contains nine—sodium, magnesium, hydrogen, calcium, iron, bismuth, tellurium, antimony, and mercury—of the substances found in our earth; and the Sun contains certainly ten, and probably fourteen, of our so-called elements. Again, it is a known fact that the Law of Gravitation reigns equally throughout the Sidereal System as throughout the Solar. The movements of binary stars have proved this to be beyond doubt. Double stars, moving round common centres of gravity in periods some of which are now ascertained, exhibit settled rhythmical actions in distant parts of our sidereal system; and their periodic times have been calculated on the assumption that their revolutions are determined by a force identical with that which regulates the revolutions of planets and satellites, and the subsequent performances of their revolutions in the

predicted periods, have verified the assumption. Out of a total number of 6,000 double stars known at the present time, 650 have been demonstrated to be physically connected systems—two suns turning round a common centre of gravity. There are still more complicated groups—systems of three, or four, or even more suns. 'Probably,' says Humboldt, 'the sextuple star θ Orionis constitutes a real system, for the five smaller stars have the same proper motion as the principal one.' (we may add, that Mr. Lassell has discovered a seventh star in this remarkable system, so that θ Orionis is a septuple star). But now more indicative of the nebulous origin of the Universe than any of the afore-cited examples, is the fact that a large portion of the sidereal system is still in a state of nebulosity. More than 5,000 nebulæ are now known, and this number increases in proportion as the different regions of the sky are explored with more powerful instruments. Though distributed in more or less degree throughout the whole Universe, as far as our explorations have hitherto gone, the distribution is yet very unequal. The greatest number is found in a zone which scarcely embraces the eighth part of the heavens. It is that which contains the constellations of the Lion, the Great Bear, the Giraffe, and the Dragon; those of Boötes, Berenice's hair, and the Hunting Dogs; but principally the Virgin which is known under the name of 'the nebulous region of Virgo.' To the observer these constellations situated in this zone literally appear like stars standing out from a nebulous background, powerfully impressing him with the reasonableness of the hypothesis that a certain portion of nebulous matter has been already resolved into stars, while the remainder is yet to be resolved.

And as there are double and multiple stars, arising in all probability from one common nebula, so are there double and multiple nebulæ, arising in equal probability from one vast primary nebula. It has been proved that

there are groups of nebulæ analogous to groups of stars; that is to say, the components are without doubt connected. Some appear formed of two globular clusters, in which the central condensation indicates not only a spherical figure, but probably also real centres of attraction. Sometimes the components appear entirely separate and distinct; sometimes they seem to encroach one upon the other. Sometimes, again, one of the components only is round or globular, while the other takes an elongated elliptical form. The number of the nebulous centres is often very considerable. The group which forms the largest of the two clouds of Magellan is believed to consist of seven centres.

But now, just as we have seen that the hypothesis which supposes that our Earth has been thrown out from the atmosphere of the Sun is at least not unreasonable, so let us now see how it is not less reasonable to suppose that at some distant period, the Earth must eventually return into the Sun.

The belief, for which there are so many reasons, that the Solar System has had a nebular genesis, is the belief that it has arisen by the integration of Matter and concomitant loss of Motion; so that, from a widely diffused incoherent state, it has resolved itself into a consolidated coherent state. And while there has been going on this gradual concentration of the Solar System as an aggregate, each planet, and each satellite of every planet, has been similarly undergoing an analogous concentration. But the successively changed forms which must have arisen during the evolution of the Solar System were so many kinds of moving equilibrium, growing gradually into nearly complete equilibrium. For the genesis of each nebulous ring implies a perfect balancing of that aggregative force which the whole spheroid exercises on its equatorial portion by that centrifugal force which the equatorial portion has acquired during previous concentration: so long as these two forces are not equal, the equatorial portion follows the

contracting mass; but as soon as the second force has increased up to an equality with the first, the equatorial portion can follow no further, and remains behind. But there is another species of equilibration going on in the Solar System—the equilibration of that molecular motion known as Heat. It is gradually being recognised that the Sun cannot continue to give off through all future time an undiminished amount of Light and Heat; the only known source that can be assigned for the insensible motions constituting solar light and heat is the sensible motion which disappears during the progressing concentration of the Sun's substance; and that there is such a concentration follows as a corollary from the nebular hypothesis. But however perfect may be the Earth's own equilibration, we must not forget that it, like everything else in nature, does not stand alone, but that it is subjected to the influences of other bodies, and that it is especially exposed to the contingencies of its own environment. Every mass, from a grain of sand to a planet or a sun, radiates heat to other masses, and absorbs heat radiated by other masses; and in so far as it does the one it becomes integrated, while in so far as it does the other it becomes disintegrated. The force which it is believed must eventually bring the Earth into the Sun, is the resistance of the ethereal medium. From ethereal resistance is inferred a retardation of all moving bodies in the Solar System—a retardation which certain astronomers contend even now shows its effects in the relative nearness to one another of the orbits of the older planets. And if this be so, there must come a time—immeasurably distant, it is true—when the Earth's slowly diminishing orbit will end in the Sun. It need scarcely be said that when two such bodies as the Sun and the Earth come into collision it must end in the reduction of the smaller body into a gaseous condition. And in the same manner it is not unreasonable to infer that the whole Sidereal System will eventually be reduced to the state of

nebulousity from which it originated. When each body has reached its extreme state of integration, molecular motion must take the place of molar motion, insensible motion must appear in the stead of sensible; and thus a process of disintegration must be gradually going on; while it follows that one body must almost necessarily be brought under the attraction of its neighbour. And if the collision of such unequal bodies as the Sun and the Earth would end in the reduction of the smaller body into a gaseous condition, it need scarcely be said that the collision of two bodies of nearly equal size and weight would end in the reduction of both of them into a gaseous condition.

Thus it does not appear to be unreasonable to infer that, like as the whole Universe has in all probability originated from a nebulous condition, so it is destined to return into a similar nebulous condition, to be built up again, perchance, (who can tell?) into fresh forms of Suns and Planets and Satellites.

More than thirty years ago David Strauss, in his work on 'Dogmatic Divinity,' broached this doctrine:—

'As we are competent to geologically trace the gradual formation of our earth, it follows with metaphysical necessity that she must likewise perish; as a something having a beginning and not an end would add to the sum of being in the universe, and in consequence annul its infinity. It can only remain a constant and absolute whole in virtue of a perpetual alternation of birth and dissolution among its individual component parts. A gradation in respect of their comparative maturity is unquestionably observable among the members of our solar system; thus even may the mighty whole of the Cosmos resemble one of those tropical trees on which, simultaneously, here a blossom bursts into flower, there a ripe fruit drops from the bough.'

And more recently Dr. Strauss has given vent to the same doctrine in his 'Old Faith and New':

'We must make a distinction between the world or

universe in the absolute, and the world in the relative sense of the term, when it admits of a plural; that indeed every world in the latter sense, even to the most comprehensive of its constituents, has a limit in space, as well as a beginning and end in time, yet that the universe diffuses itself in boundless yet coherent extension throughout all space and time. Not only our earth, but the solar system as well, has been what it is not at present—had at one time no existence as a system, and will one day cease to exist as such. Time has been when our earth was not yet inhabited by a rational creature, and yet further back, not even by a living creature; nay, a time when she was not as yet compacted to a solid body, when she was not as yet separated from the sun and the other planets. But if we contemplate the universe as a whole, there never has been a time when it did not exist, when there did not exist in it a distinction between the heavenly bodies, life, and reason; for all this, if not as yet existing in one part of the Cosmos, already existed in another, while in a third it had already ceased to exist: here it was in the act of blooming, yonder in full flower, at a third place already in decline; but the Cosmos itself—the sum-total of infinite worlds in all stages of growth and decay—abode eternally unchanged, in the constancy of its absolute energy, amid the everlasting revolution and mutation of things.'

Indeed more than a century ago, Kant, in his 'General History and Theory of the Heavens,' published in 1755, indulged in the same speculations. He calls the world 'a phœnix, which but consumes itself in order to rise rejuvenated from its ashes;' and shows that as on our earth decay in one place is compensated by growth in another, so in like manner 'worlds and systems of worlds perish, and are engulfed in the abyss of eternity. Meanwhile, creation is ever active to erect new structures in other regions of the heavens, and to replace the loss with profit; and if a system of worlds has, in the course of its duration,

'exhausted every variety of life of which its constitution will allow, if it has become a superfluous link in the chain of being, then nothing can be more fit than that it should now play its last part in the drama of the successive transformations of the universe—a part which is but the due of every finite phenomenon—that of rendering its tribute to mutability. Creation is so infinite that we may unhesitatingly regard a world or a galaxy of worlds, in comparison to it, as we would a flower or an insect as compared to the earth.'

Not that Kant thinks the extinction of the earth is likely to be final. He sees no reason why if the earth could once evolve itself out of chaos, it should not be able to evolve itself again:—'We shall not hesitate,' he says, 'to admit this (*i.e.* the possibility of a new formation) when it is considered that as soon as the planets and comets have attained the last degree of exhaustion induced by their circling motion in space, they will all be precipitated on the sun, and thus add immeasurably to his heat. This fire, violently increased by the added fuel, will, unquestionably, not only resolve all things again into their minutest elements, but will likewise, with an expansive power commensurate to its heat, again diffuse and distribute them over the same ample spaces which they had occupied before the first formation of Nature. Then the vehemence of the central fire having abated, from the almost complete destruction of its mass, it will regularly repeat the ancient procreations and systematically-connected motions, by a combination of the forces of attraction and repulsion, and thus once more produce a new macrocosm.'

We begin to see now what Leibnitz meant when he declared that 'God, the primitive Monad, was in a ceaseless state of expansion and contraction.' Nay, hundreds of years before Leibnitz, Buddhism taught that there never has been a time when worlds and beings have not been evolved in endless revolutions of birth and decay. Every

world has arisen from a former ruined world; infinite time is divided into the greater and lesser Kalpas, *i.e.* into more or less extensive periods of destruction and renovation, caused by the elemental forces of water, wind, or fire.

To descend, however, from the region of speculation to that of proved fact:—

In the case of vital phenomena the origin of vegetable and animal life is entirely to be traced to the Sun. The matter of the animal body is that of inorganic nature. There is no substance in the animal tissues which is not primarily derived from the rocks, the water, and the air. When we look to our planet, we find it to be an aggregate of solids, liquids, and gases; but these we find may be subdivided into still more elementary constituents. We know that that liquid, so necessary to all vegetable and animal life, called Water, is but a composition arising from the union of a small quantity of hydrogen with a large quantity of oxygen. Our chalk-hills are the result of a combination, in definite proportions, of carbon, oxygen, and calcium. The principle of gravitation we know to be an attraction which every particle of matter, however small, has for every other particle. With gravity there is no selection of favourite particles, and consequently neither attraction nor repulsion. The attraction of gravitation is proportional to the *quantity* of the attracting matter, but the *quality* is not taken into consideration. The study of Physics, however, teaches us that in the molecular world, atoms exist which do not exhibit this disregard to *quality*. Repulsion and attraction are the consequence; and wherever two atoms capable of uniting together by their mutual attractions exist separately, they form a store of potential energy, Thus our woods, forests, and coal-fields, on the one hand, and our atmospheric oxygen on the other, constitute a vast store of energy of this kind. The whole stock of energy or working-power in the world consists of attractions, repulsions, and motions. When certain proportions of oxygen

unite with certain proportions of hydrogen, to form water, the atoms are first drawn towards each other; they move, they clash, and then recoil and quiver. To this quivering motion we give the name of Heat. But to unlock the embrace of these atoms and place them in their original form, as much heat is required as was generated by their union. Such reversals, as we know, occur daily and hourly in nature. By the solar waves the oxygen of water is divorced from its hydrogen in the leaves of plants.

The building up of the vegetable, then, is effected by the Sun, through the reduction of chemical compounds. And as the earth and atmosphere offer themselves as the nutriment of the vegetable world, so does the latter, which contains no constituent not found in inorganic nature, offer itself to the animal world. Mixed with certain inorganic substances—water, for example, the vegetable constitutes, in the long run, the sole sustenance of the animal. The phenomena of animal life are more or less complicated reversals of the vegetable process of reduction. 'We eat the vegetable,' as Professor Tyndall tells us,[1] 'and we breathe the oxygen of the air; and in our bodies the oxygen, which had been lifted from the carbon and the hydrogen by the action of the sun, again falls towards them, producing animal heat and developing animal forms. Through the most complicated phenomena of vitality this law runs:—The vegetable is produced while a weight rises, the animal is produced while a weight falls.' Animals may be divided into two classes, the first of which can utilise the vegetable world immediately, having chemical forces strong enough to cope with its most refractory parts; the second class use the vegetable world mediately. But in neither class have we an atom newly created. As Professor Tyndall has lucidly expressed it, 'The animal world is, so to say, a distillation through the vegetable world from inorganic nature.'

[1] 'Fragments of Science,' fifth edition, p. 462.

The organisms which occupy the border land between the animal and vegetable kingdoms share with plants the ability to decompose carbonic acid under the influence of light. Water containing *Protozoa* gives off oxygen on exposure to the Sun's rays. Protoplasm, simple or nucleated, is the formal basis of all life. All living powers are cognate; all living forms are at bottom of one character. And Protoplasm, being, as it is, a combination, in very complex union, of the four elements carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, and nitrogen, demonstrates to us that without the inorganic world the organic world could not have been what it is, even if it could have come into existance at all, which, as far as we can judge, it would have been unable to do. And as the organic world arises from the inorganic, so, in like manner, must it return into the inorganic. All vegetable and all animal life sooner or later dies; and when it dies is resolved into the mineral and lifeless constituents from which it was compounded, only at some subsequent period to be built up again into fresh forms of vegetable, animal, or man. Thus, with another meaning than theirs we may verify those ancient hypotheses of the Oriental and Greek Philosophers, Transmigration and Metamorphosis. Every meal we take testifies to its truth. The vegetable passes into the ox or sheep and forms its flesh; flesh which in its turn passes into our bodies in the shape of beef or mutton to nourish us. And can we stop here? Must we not acknowledge, unhesitatingly, though reverently, that in some mysterious, and at bottom, entirely incomprehensible way, Matter influences Mind, as Mind, in its turn, re-acts upon Matter? That a gluttonous meal may oppress our mental vigour, while sparkling wine may exhilarate it? That *Hashisch* may make us benevolent, and *Bhang* induce us to malevolence? That a diseased liver causes us to feel melancholy, while a healthy one induces us to be sanguine? All these are well-ascertained facts, and nearly equally well ascer-

tained is the knowledge of the influence Mind exercises over Matter. It is an every-day experience that anxiety or a fit of bad temper hinders the digestive power, while laughter and merriment promote it. And it is now growing to be a surely, though, alas, a too slowly, recognised fact that mental or moral responsibility is a question to be decided by the physician rather than the lawyer or theologian.

But though such doctrines sound like Materialism, the readers of the First Volume of this sketch need scarcely be assured that I myself am no materialist in the ordinary sense of that word. I do not believe that a mere mechanical self-arrangement of perishable matter is sufficient to account for the origin of the universe; but rather that all Matter and all Mind are but two outer aspects of the one Comprehensive Reality which underlies as it includes all external phenomena; and that there is a Unity which runs through Nature, displaying itself alike in mineral, plant, and animal, connecting the organic world with the inorganic. Idealism and Materialism are two ways of looking at the same thing; and though Pantheism as a rule employs the former method, because of its greater spirituality, she does not repudiate those who prefer the latter. Her war is not with Materialism, but with Dualism. She opposes the belief that would demonstrate two substances—an External Creator on the one hand and a perishable and created Universe on the other. Materialism and Idealism supplement each other; taken alone they are self-destructive. 'It is just as true,' says Schopenhauer, 'that the percipient is a product of Matter, as that Matter is a mere conception of the percipient, but the proposition is equally one-sided.' And as the author of the 'History of Materialism' tells us, 'We are justified in assuming physical conditions for everything, even for the mechanism of thought; but we are equally justified in considering not only the external world, but the organs, also, with which we perceive

it, as mere images of that which actually exists.' Both Idealism and Materialism may be called Monistic inasmuch as they endeavour to deduce the Universe from a single principle: the one theory starts from below; the other from above. Materialism employs atoms and forces, Idealism spirit and ideas; but sooner or later they are forced to coalesce, and each must be lost in the other. The very thinkers who have been most subjected to the accusation of materialism are identically those most earnest in their repudiation of it. Dr. David Strauss says:—'Religion with us is no longer what it was with our forefathers, but it does not follow that it is extinct in us. At all events, we have retained the essential ingredient of all religion—the sentiment of unconditional dependence. Whether we say God or Cosmos, we feel our relation to the one, as to the other, to be one of absolute dependence. . . . The argument of the old religion was, that as the reasonable and good in mankind proceeded from consciousness and will, that therefore what on a large scale corresponds to this in the world must likewise proceed from an author endowed with intelligent volition. We have given up this mode of inference; we no longer regard the Cosmos as the work of a reasonable and good creator, but as rather the laboratory of the reasonable and good. . . . Of course in this case we must place in the cause what lies in the effect; that which comes out must have been in. But it is only the limitation of our human faculty of representation which forces us to make these distinctions: the Cosmos is simultaneously both Cause and Effect, the outward and the inward together.

'We stand here at the limits of our knowledge; we gaze into an abyss we can fathom no farther. But this much at least is certain,—that in the personal image which meets our gaze, there is but a reflection of the wondering spectator himself. If we always bore this in mind, there would be as little objection to the expression—'God' as to

the rising and setting of the sun, were we all the time quite conscious of the actual circumstances. But this condition is not fulfilled. Even the conception of the Absolute to which our modern philosophy is so partial, easily tends again to assume some kind of personality. We, in consequence, prefer the designation of the All, or the Cosmos, not overlooking, however, that this runs the danger of leading us to think of the sum-total of phenomena instead of the One Essence of Forces and Laws which manifest and fulfil themselves. But we would rather say too little than too much.

'At any rate that on which we feel ourselves entirely dependent, is by no means merely a rude power to which we bow in mute resignation, but is at the same time both order and law, reason and goodness, to which we surrender ourselves in loving trust.'[1]

'Spirit exists everywhere in Nature,' says Haeckel,[2] 'and we know of no spirit outside of Nature. . . . The "spirit" and "mind" of man are but forces which are inseparably connected with the material substance of our bodies. Just as the motive force of our flesh is involved in the muscular form-element of the brain. . . . We know of no matter which does not possess force, and conversely of no forces that are not connected with matter.

. . . . 'The magnet attracting iron filings, powder exploding, steam driving the locomotive, are active inorganic substances; they work by active force just as does the sensitive mimosa, when it folds its leaves at a touch—as does the Amphioxus, when it buries itself in the sand—as does Man when he thinks.'

'All three worlds' (the inorganic, the vegetable and animal) says Dr. Tyndall,[3] 'constitute a unity, in which I picture life as immanent everywhere. Nor am I anxious

[1] 'The Old Faith and New,' pp. 161–164.
[2] 'Evolution of Man,' vol. i. pp. 455–457.
[3] 'Fragments of Science,' p. 351.

to shut out the idea that the life here spoken of may be but a subordinate part and function of a Higher Life, as the living, moving, blood is subordinate to the living man.'

And Mr. Herbert Spencer says :—[1]

'Men who have not risen above that vulgar conception which unites with Matter the contemptuous epithets "gross" and "brute," may naturally feel dismay at the proposal to reduce the phenomena of Life, of Mind, and of Society to a level with those which they think so degraded. But whoever remembers that the forms of existence which the uncultivated speak of with so much scorn, are shown by the man of science to be the more marvellous in their attributes the more they are investigated, and are also proved to be in their ultimate natures absolutely incomprehensible—as absolutely incomprehensible as sensation, or the conscious something which perceives it—whoever clearly recognises this truth, will see that the course proposed does not imply a degradation of the so-called higher, but an elevation of the so-called lower. Perceiving, as he will, that the Materialist and Spiritualist controversy is a mere war of words, in which the disputants are equally absurd—each thinking he understands that which it is impossible for any man to understand—he will perceive how utterly groundless is the fear referred to. Being fully convinced that whatever nomenclature is used the ultimate mystery must remain the same, he will be as ready to formulate all phenomena in terms of Matter, Motion and Force, as in any other terms ; and will rather indeed anticipate, that only in a doctrine which recognises the Unknown Cause as co-extensive with all orders of phenomena, can there be a consistent Religion or a consistent Philosophy.'

The class of men most eager in their repudiation of Pantheism as a religion is that very large class—including not only believers in revelation, but some of the most enlightened Theists—who imagine they cannot worthily

[1] 'First Principles,' pp. 556, 557.

conceive the First Cause other than a Person. Anthropomorphism, with them, is a synonym for all Religion, and a doubt upon the one the destruction of the other.

Now, not only is Anthropomorphism repudiated in all the more elevated passages of Scripture, but Pantheism is constantly implied.[1] True, if we contend for a belief in the *verbal* inspiration of Scripture, we shall doubtless find many passages inculcating the doctrine of Anthropomorphism. But to contend for this belief in verbal inspiration means that we must not hesitate to admit not only that God acts after the method of the vilest of human beings, but even that a thing can at once be and not be; and like palpable contradictions. We must not, for instance, merely believe in the blasphemous improbability that God would harden Pharaoh's heart in order to have an opportunity of displaying His own glory, and afterwards kill the unhappy victim because he could not help his heart being thus hardened. But we shall have at one and the same time to believe that God could move David to number Israel and Judah, *i.e.* to *tempt* him to a deed that was thought worthy of great punishment and deep repentance (2 Sam. ch. xxiv.) but we must also at the same time believe with St. James (ch. i. v. 13) that God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man. We must believe again, for instance, that God repents Himself of such and such deeds; and at the same time believe that God is not a man that He should repent. But unless we choose to carry our belief in the inspiration of Scripture to this point of absurdity, then, I think, we must acknowledge that in all the more spiritual Psalms, as well as in the nobler writings of Prophets and Apostles, there is a repudiation of Anthropomorphism.

If, then, there is no necessity for believers in revelation to repudiate the doctrine of Pantheism, still less, does it appear to me, is there any necessity for those believers *in* God who have outgrown belief in the Bible to repudiate

[1] See especially Psal. cxxxix. 8–10; Jer. xxiii. 23, 24; Acts xvii. 28.

this doctrine. Surely, if there be a God, and if we do know or can know ever so little about Him, all that we do or can know, be it great or be it little, testifies to the certainty that God does not work after the human method.[1] Man is eminently variable, open to solicitation, guided by the prayers and wishes of his fellow-creatures. The best men are often those who are the most easily guided, who forgive injuries the most readily, and remit, or at all events commute, the just punishment of offenders. Rightly so, because the best men are not only the most tender-hearted, but frequently possess the greater share of intellect, and are, therefore, the most capable of gauging the human heart, of knowing whether its temptations were greater than could be resisted. But with God there is not this yielding to solicitation. Those who yield, almost willingly, to very slight temptation, are not punished a whit more severely than those who yield, very reluctantly, only after the greatest temptation. Nay, Ignorance and Vice are treated alike, share the same fate. Human Motives, which in the dealings of one man to another, are of paramount consideration are, at all events, apparently utterly disregarded by God. The mother who through sheer accident gives her first-born some poisonous medicine, has to witness its agonised death equally with the murderess who gives it after premeditation. Obey the laws of Nature, whether accidentally or intentionally, and she rewards you with a lavish bountifulness not to be imitated by man. Disobey

[1] 'To the speculation of the present day,' says Dr. Strauss in his *Christliche Glaubenslehre*, 'God is as little a person beside or over other persons as he is mere universal substance, in the Divine Essence of which to conceive implanted personality (*Insichsetzen der Persönlichkeit*) were an incongruity. God is the eternal movement of the universal ceaselessly becoming subject, first attaining objectivity and true reality in the subjective, and so comprehending the subject in his abstract individuality (*Fürsichsein*). Infinite and eternal or abstract personality gives issue from himself to his other self,—Nature, in order that he may return eternally as self-conscious idea or spirit to himself. The personality of God, therefore, must not be conceived as an individuality. Instead of personifying the absolute, we must learn to conceive the absolute as personified in the infinity of things.'

her, and she punishes you with a cold remorselessness, luckily but very rarely imitated by man. Nature is rigorous, but never changeable or fickle. Fire always burns as water always quenches, and human prayers will be found powerless to deprive them of their properties.

Prayer, while of the very highest value to the subject, objectively considered, must be pronounced to be absolutely without effect. Nay, if rigorously considered, it will be found difficult to conceive how the idea of God's malleability by human prayers and wishes should have first sprung into existence. For surely, if God be so omnipotent and beneficent as His worshippers believe Him to be, He cannot need the guidance of His own workmanship. The Efficient Cause of the Universe must be the best Judge of His own works. Any attempt at altering that which He has thought fit to ordain, must not be only pronounced vain and impotent, but in reality approaches to a species of unconscious blasphemy.[1]

[1] 'The same question' says Mr. Hunt, 'returns when we enquire into the nature of prayer. If there is no special providence, it seems useless to pray. Shelley said of the "Spirit of Nature" that "unlike the God of human error, it required no prayers or praises." If all is inviolably fixed, it is idle to pray. If God has put within our reach all which He intended that we should have, why ask Him for more? Can our petitions change His order? Will He be moved by our importunity? Reason tells us that He cannot. Yet we pray. Religion teaches men to pray. Those who try to explain it say that it is God's will that we should pray—His will to give us things on condition that we ask them, as a father gives his children gifts, yet requires of his children that they ask them from him. Thus prayer becomes a religious exercise, profitable to ourselves by raising and cherishing in us good dispositions. And so rational men fall back on the worship of God in His impersonality. Prayer becomes lost in praise. Awful feelings of reverence overpower the soul. Prayer becomes a life, a love, a longing, a feeling of the Divine within us. "The best of all prayers," says Fénelon, "is to act with a pure intention, and with a continual reference to the will of God. It is not by a miracle, but by a movement of the heart that we are benefited, by a submissive spirit." Hence petitions to God are not like petitions to men. We repeat the same words in liturgies. Men repeat them for centuries. They are never old. They never change God. They are not meant to change God, but they produce good dispositions in the sincere worshipper. And thus we sometimes sing our prayers as well as our praises, for rational prayer cannot be other

Practically considered, moreover, if we once try to imagine the effect of the Laws of Nature being moulded by human prayer or caprice, we should simply find it would amount to entire, hopeless confusion. It would be impossible for us to undertake any great work, to commence any enterprise, to discover or invent, to seek to cure or to alleviate disease, if the Forces of Nature were one whit less stable in their behaviour than is their custom. Order is the basis of God's government. Nature, the garment with which He clothes Himself. Study these Natural Laws; behave conformably to them, and thou wilt prosper. Refuse to study them, or in any way violate them, and thou wilt be unprosperous. Just so far as thou study and obey Nature, exactly so far will Nature reward or punish thee. A rigorous ruler, but exact. Fickleness is unknown in such a government; for it is harmonious and unchangeable, without a shadow of turning or unstable rule.

Why should we be surprised we cannot fully gauge God's meaning? That the finite cannot comprehend the Infinite has passed into a truism; but, like so many truisms, has lost, by constant repetition, the full pregnancy of its original meaning. Anthropomorphic worshippers of God can never grasp the idea in its entire comprehensiveness. For they ever picture Him as yet a greater and a greater *man*; and in such a conception necessarily introduce the idea of limitation and imperfection. Picture Him as the underlying Reality at the basis of all phenomena, and we immediately perceive the impossibility of our comprehending Him in his entirety.

Let us try, even though imperfectly, to bring before our recollection some of the knowledge of the varied pheno-

than praise. Is not this the reconciliation of Wordsworth's Pantheism with his High Churchism? The Cathedral is not the dwelling-place of God, but it helps us to realise the presence of The Ever-Near. The very stones are made to sing psalms to God. We project the Divine within us, and that externally realised speaks to the Divine in others. Even in our prayers we worship God personal and impersonal.' 'Essay on Pantheism,' p. 348.

mena man's limited understanding has enabled him to acquire. We shall then arrive at some better comprehension of the improbability of the Efficient Cause of these phenomena being confined within the person of an anthropomorphic being.

Hitherto we have for the most part been considering the wonders of terrestrial phenomena. Liquids and solids; vegetables and animals; and we saw that the existence of each was primarily dependent upon the Sun. Nay, even man himself must acknowledge the like dependence. For man, without the vegetables (produced through the Sun's influence) that directly or indirectly are his sole nourishment, could not have existed for one hour. Yet consider the full wonder of this being that thus arises from the pre-existence of the vegetable:—

Something under a hundred years ago each one of us now living was potentially contained, physiologists tell us, in an egg not more than the one-hundred-and-twentieth of an inch in diameter. In nine brief months, from this minute egg has gradually developed in marvellous perfection the infant form of the human being. Its eye, with its lens, and humours, and retina. Its ear, with its tympanum, cochlea, and Corti's organ—that marvellous instrument comprising three thousand strings. Its tiny hands and feet. Its lungs and internal viscera. All these wonders arising from the gradual development during a few brief months of an infinitesimal egg! In three years the babe will have acquired the marvellous faculty of speech. In thirty he will have arrived at full maturity, with the capacity, perchance, of a Darwin or Spencer, a Tennyson or Wordsworth, a Wagner or Beethoven. Yet without the existence of the Sun this wonder could not have been. Physically and mentally he is dependent on it. His dwelling-place, the Earth, is but a slave dependent on the Sun's despotic sway. His wonderful organ of sight depends upon the vibration of the Sun's rays. His animal

body is nourished upon the substances that are solely the product of the Sun's heat and light. Yet can he say that the Sun was created for his use? All the marvellous transformations of terrestrial nature; all her births; her deaths; her darkness and light; her growth and decay; all the action on this our Earth is carried on by the *two-thousand-three-hundred-millionth* part of the force radiated by the Sun! For this is all the Earth can grasp, as it were, of his rays given out in all directions. The power of the Sun is so enormous, the necessities of the trivial Earth so few, that he can supply them by this small fraction of his mighty power. Other planets, we know, has he dependent on him; some larger, some smaller than our own; inhabited, for aught we can tell, by nobler or more degraded forms of life.

Yet if our Earth dwarfs before the greater glory of the Sun, that Sun in its turn is but one of an infinite many, some larger, some smaller than himself. Each star is a sun. On a clear night, it is said, the naked eye can distinguish some four thousand of these so-wonderful suns; but the calculations of Struve give the total number of stars visible in the entire heavens, by the aid of Sir William Herschel's 20-feet reflector, as more than twenty millions! Yet the most modern astronomers contend that these approximate numbers are greatly below the real mark. Even in our own Universe, alone (as it may be called, since it comprises our solar system,) the Milky Way, is said to be contained eighteen millions of stars.

Imagination dwarfs before these numbers. We heap up numeral after numeral; but they are but symbols: symbols it is impossible for the human mind to realize. Wheel within wheel; system within system; these planets and stars and systems of stars roll on in their ceaseless motion. Why or Wherefore they are, man knows not. Whence they came, Whither they are travelling, he knows not either. In the crass ignorance of his savage state he

could but depict them as twinkling lights created for the benefit of himself. He knows better now. He has learnt to regard himself, as Goethe expresses it, 'as part of a part, which part at the first was All.' Very finite is his power of acquiring knowledge, yet of late years he has learnt to use that power well. He has investigated the earth, the ocean, even in part the heavens. But the more successful his investigations, the greater his discoveries, the more is he convinced of the Unity of Plan that runs through everything. He no longer believes in capricious Wills, but in rigid Law. Polytheism is leaving him. Anthropomorphism will surely follow. Civilisation shows a gradual and increasing advance in his finite conceptions of the Infinite. As Mr. Spencer truly says,[1] 'The coalescence of polytheistic conceptions into the monotheistic conception, and the reduction of the monotheistic conception to a more and more general form in which personal superintendence becomes merged in universal immanence clearly shows this advance.' Soon he will no longer wonder that he can but know God in part; for regarding Him as he will, not only as the Efficient Cause, but as the immanent basis, the underlying Reality of all Phenomena, he will feel the impossibility of an infinitesimal part comprehending such an infinite whole. Turn where he may, he finds infinity around him, beneath him, above him. He cannot comprehend the infinitely great. It is equally impossible to gauge the infinitely small. Though he has invented instruments which have freed his senses from a portion of their more transparent weakness, he is yet as powerless to gauge the Universe in its minutiæ as he is in its magnitude.

'A beam of light,' says Dr. Tyndall,[2] 'was permitted to act upon a certain vapour. In two minutes the azure appeared, but at the end of fifteen minutes it had not ceased to be azure. After fifteen minutes, for example, its

[1] 'First Principles,' p. 552.

[2] 'Fragments of Science,' pp. 443, 444.

colour, and some other phenomena, pronounced it to be a blue of distinctly smaller particles than those sought for in vain by Mr. Huxley. These particles, as already stated, must have been less than the one-hundred-thousandth of an inch in diameter. And now I want you to consider the following question: Here are particles which have been growing continually for fifteen minutes, and at the end of that time are demonstrably smaller than those which defied the microscope of Mr. Huxley. *What must have been the size of those particles at the beginning of their growth?* What notion can you form of the magnitude of such particles? The distances of stellar space give us simply a bewildering sense of vastness, without leaving any distinct impression on the mind; and the magnitudes with which we have here to do bewilder us equally in the opposite direction. We are dealing with infinitesimals, compared with which the test-objects of the microscope are literally immense.'

The sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills, and the plains—
Are not these, O Soul, the vision of Him who reigns?

Is not the vision He? though He be not that which He seems?
Dreams are true while they last, and do we not live in dreams?

Earth, these solid stars, this weight of body and limb,
Are they not sign and symbol of thy division from Him?

Dark is the world to thee: thyself art the reason why;
For is He not all but thou, that has power to feel 'I am I'?

Glory about thee, without thee; and thou fulfillest thy doom,
Making Him broken gleams, and a stifled splendour and gloom.

Speak to Him thou for He hears, and Spirit with spirit can meet—
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.

God is law, say the wise; O Soul, and let us rejoice,
For if He thunder by law, the thunder is yet His voice.

Law is God, say some: no God at all, says the fool;
For all we have power to see is a straight staff bent in a pool;

And the ear of man cannot hear, and the eye of man cannot see;
But if we could see and hear, this vision—were it not He?[1]

Well may we exclaim with the Psalmist: 'Whither shall I go then from Thy spirit, or whither shall I go then from Thy presence? If I climb up into heaven, Thou art there; if I go down to hell, Thou art there also. If I take the wings of the morning, and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there also shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me.'

Contrast this conception of God with the generally received one. On the one hand, an anthropomorphic being, jealous, revengeful, merciless, unless propitiated by slavish adulation. On the other, the Soul of All Things—of 'the Sun, the Moon, the Stars, the Seas, the Hills, and the Plains'; yea, and of Man also. Tennyson has imagined God to be in all but in man; but in this I would rather accept the teaching of Carlyle when he says, 'If all things whatsoever that we look upon are emblens to us of the Highest God, I add that more so than any of them is man such an emblem. You have heard of St. Chrysostom's celebrated saying in reference to the Shechinah, or Ark of Testimony, visible Revelation of God, among the Hebrews: 'The true Shechinah is Man.' Yes, this is even so: this is no vain phrase, it is veritably so. The essence of our being, the mystery in us that calls itself 'I'—ah, what words have we for such things?—is a breath of Heaven; the Highest Being reveals Himself in man. This body, these faculties, this life of ours, is it not all a vesture for that Unnamed? 'There is but one Temple in the Universe,' says the devout Novalis, 'and that is the Body of Man. Nothing is holier than that high form. Bending before men is a reverence done to this Revelation in the Flesh. We touch Heaven when we lay our hand on a human body!' This sounds much like a mere flourish of rhetoric; but it is not so. If well meditated, it will turn out to be a scientific fact; the

[1] 'The Higher Pantheism,' by Alfred Tennyson.

expression, in such words as can be had, of the actual truth of the thing. We are the miracle of miracles—the great inscrutable mystery of God. We cannot understand, we know not how to speak of it; but we may feel and know, if we like, that it is verily so.'

What is this mystery that dwells within us—this conscious something that perceives and thinks? We cannot give it name or shape or substance. We only know that it exists; we know of its reality far more certainly than of the reality of matter. For all our knowledge of matter comes through the medium of this strange 'something.' Is it an entity separate from, though for a time dwelling within, the body? Or it is merely the sum total of vegetable and animal particles? We know not; although the tendency of Science seems to be towards the latter conclusion. Who can give body or form to thought? We know that we think; but if we try to realise what it is that thinks, we are lost in confusion. The soul of man baffles the comprehension of man almost as wholly as does the Soul of the Universe. For truly both are in their essence incomprehensible. Though one be infinitesimally small and the other infinitely great, one is but a portion of the other, and in their essence both are beyond our understanding. Yet in both cases we know there is this 'something,' though it absolutely refuses to be realized in words.

'When I attempt to give the power which I see manifested in the Universe an objective form,' says Professor Tyndall, 'personal or otherwise, it slips away from me, declining all intellectual manipulation. I dare not, save poetically, use the pronoun "He," regarding it; I dare not call it a "Mind;" I refuse to call it even a "Cause." Its mystery overshadows me; but it remains a mystery, while the objective frames which my neighbours try to make it fit, simply distort and desecrate it.'[1]

[1] 'Fragments of Science,' p. 336.

To me there is more real religion, more reverent humility, in this description of God than in any, even the highest anthropomorphic conception with which He has been endowed.

'This which to most will seem an essentially irreligious position,' says Mr. Herbert Spencer, 'is an essentially religious one—nay, is *the* religious one, to which as already shown, all others are but approximations. In the estimate it implies of the Ultimate Cause, it does not fall short of the alternative position, but exceeds it. Those who espouse this alternative position, make the erroneous assumption that the choice is between personality and something lower than personality; whereas the choice is rather between personality and something higher. Is it not just possible that there is a mode of being as much transcending Intelligence and Will as these transcend mechanical motion? It is true that we are totally unable to conceive any such higher mode of being. But this is not a reason for questioning its existence; it is rather the reverse. Have we not seen how utterly incompetent our minds are to form even an approach to a conception of that which underlies all phenomena? Is it not proved that this incompetency is the incompetency of the Conditioned to grasp the Unconditioned? Does it not follow that the Ultimate Cause cannot in any respect be conceived by us because It is in every respect greater than can be conceived? And may we not therefore rightly refrain from assigning to It any attributes whatever, on the ground that such attributes, derived as they must be from our own natures, are not elevations, but degradations? Indeed, it seems somewhat strange that men should suppose the highest worship to lie in assimilating the object of their worship to themselves. Not in asserting a transcendent difference, but in asserting a certain likeness, consists the element of their creed which they think essential. It is true that from the time when the rudest savages imagined the causes of

all things to be creatures of flesh and blood like themselves down to our own time, the degree of assumed likeness has been diminishing. But though a bodily form and substance similar to that of man, has long since ceased, among cultivated races, to be a literally conceived attribute of the Ultimate Cause—though the grosser human desires have been also rejected as unfit elements of the conception—though there is some hesitation in ascribing even the higher human feelings, save in greatly idealized shapes; yet it is still thought not only proper, but imperative, to ascribe the most abstract qualities of our nature. To think of the Creative Power as in all respects anthropomorphous, is now considered impious by men who yet hold themselves bound to think of the Creative Power as in some respects anthropomorphous; and who do not see that the one proceeding is but an evanescent form of the other. And then, most marvellous of all, this course is persisted in even by those who contend that we are wholly unable to frame any conception whatever of the Creative Power. After it has been shown that every supposition respecting the genesis of the Universe commits us to alternative impossibilities of thought—after it has been shown that each attempt to conceive real existence ends in an intellectual suicide—after it has been shown why, by the very constitution of our minds, we are eternally debarred from thinking of the Absolute; it is still asserted that we ought to think of the Absolute thus and thus. In all imaginable ways we find thrust upon us the truth, that we are not permitted to know—nay, are not even permitted to conceive—that Reality which is behind the veil of Appearance; and yet it is said to be our duty to believe (and in so far to conceive) that this Reality exists in a certain definite manner. Shall we call this reverence, or shall we call it the reverse?'[1]

We do not think we could quote a more suggestive

[1] 'First Principles,' pp. 109, 110.

passage as an argument for the truth of Pantheism than the above passage from the great philosopher of this century. Atheism would deny the existence of a Reality. Agnosticism would refuse to give an opinion at all. But Pantheism asserts that there is a Reality—incomprehensible indeed, because infinite—but displaying itself without possibility of contradiction through every act and phase o Nature.

CHAPTER XIV.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.

IN a rapid sketch such as the present it is more than usually necessary to summarize its leading points. Before bringing this work to its close, therefore, we will briefly review the various subjects upon which we have so cursorily touched.

First, what is Pantheism, and how has it been treated throughout this sketch? For, it must be admitted, this word 'Pantheism' requires to be defined. It is notoriously a very vague term; and has been used by a variety of writers in a variety of ways, many of which are very indefinite and obscure. If we consult the various encyclopædias and dictionaries, they unite, for the most part, in describing Pantheism as the doctrine which identifies God with the Universe. Mr. Stirling, in his work upon Hegel, says, 'To sum up a man and call him a Pantheist is to tell you just nothing at all about him.' Mr. Hunt asks 'What religion, from Indian Brâhmanism to English Protestantism, what philosophy from Thales to Hegel, might not be called Pantheistic?' Dr. Willis, in his work on Spinoza, gives a far clearer and more succinct explanation of what may be called Pantheism in its higher form, and it is in that form alone that we have preached it: 'When we have not only conceived no chasm between God and the world, but on the contrary have assumed a connection that is appreciable, the pantheistic idea is a necessary sequence; so that Pantheism, rightly understood, is nothing more than the assertion of the Divine Omnipotence, or the opposite of the

popular Dualism—God on the one hand, the world on the other; as it is also the reverse of the Atheism which denies a First Cause, and refers power and action alike to the brute Matter of the universe.' In a previous chapter, we have already cited that suggestive passage of Mr. Lewes: 'The tendency towards Pantheism is always manifesting itself. . . . In some way or other Pantheism seems the natural issue of almost every philosophy of religion when rigorously carried out.' It appears to me that the mere fact that this tendency does so constantly manifest itself should alone be considered a certain argument for its truth. Since so many philosophies, from Thales to Hegel, may be called pantheistic, surely the fact that this doctrine has occupied the attention of so many of the more thoughtful minds of every climate and every age should in itself be considered a strong *à priori* argument for its probability.

The form of Pantheism, then, which has been occupying us has been that which, discarding anthropomorphism on the one hand and naked materialism on the other, conceives God to be a Power, Eternal, Infinite, (and because Infinite, necessarily beyond our comprehension) disclosing Itself alike through every form and phenomenon of Nature. It does not identify God with perishable matter; but rather conceives Him to be related to matter somewhat as the soul is to the body. Or, perhaps a better illustration to employ would be, that of an infinite and eternal ocean upon whose surface arise a numberless variety of forms, from tiny bubbles to little ripplets and from these again to huge and mighty waves. Yet from the ocean they arise; upon its surface they are borne; back into its depths must they be merged. Water they are, and water they will ever be. The forms or bodies of all things perish, they gradually change, then pass away. But the soul abides for ever. It is One and infinite, abiding throughout eternity. Pantheism then, thus considered, invariably gives a Monistic, and not a

Dualistic, interpretation of the universe. Or, as Goethe expresses it, using the word *Nature* in the sense of God :—

> In Nature see nor shell nor kernel,
> But the All in All and the Eternal.

In the Introductory Chapter to this sketch we gave some slight utterance to those nobler aspirations of the heart of man, which are the origin of all religions and philosophies alike. We quoted from Carlyle to show that though Science has done much for us, it would be 'a poor science that would hide from us the great deep sacred infinitude of Nescience ,whither we can never penetrate, on which all science swims as a mere superficial film. This world, after all our science and sciences, is still a miracle, wonderful, inscrutable, magical and more, to whosoever will *think* of it.' We next proceeded to show that to the Theist and Pantheist alike no reliable acquaintance with the laws of God could be gained save through an acquaintance with His works. Whether He were a Creator, acting from without the universe, as is the opinion of the Theist, or a pervading Omnipresent Power acting from within, as is the opinion of the Pantheist, the text-book of Nature was the only reliable authority to which either could turn.

The first phase of Pantheism that occupied us was naturally, in order of time, the Oriental. The Hindoo came before us claiming our attention as one of the earliest races that was sufficiently developed to attempt any solution of the mystery of the world. The first conception he attains is of some Personal Being outside and apart from Nature, an exaggerated and greatly magnified likeness of himself, whom he calls his brilliant lord and protector, and to whom he offers his homage and adulation. But as he progresses in his mental development he becomes conscious of a power *within*, not apart from himself, a propulsive power that he soon grows to perceive is not confined to himself alone, but exists in greater or less degree alike in animals, minerals, plants. The only name he can find for this mysterious

power is *Brâhman*; for Brâhman meant originally force, will, wish, and the propulsive power of creation. But as in order of time this impersonal Brâhman grew to be clothed with the attributes of personality another name, still more abstract in its meaning, was substituted for it—*Âtman*; for âtman, originally meaning breath or spirit, comes to mean self and self alone. This Âtman also grew, but grew as it were without attributes, always remaining free from myth and worship. Throughout all the Hindoo religions and philosophies alike, notwithstanding the degradation of Brâhmanic sacerdotalism or the somewhat mystical character of the philosophy of the Vedanta or the Bhagavad Gîtâ, this same consciousness of an Immanent Impersonal Power displays itself.

We next proceeded to the consideration of Greek Pantheism, and we found that in this race too, as soon as they had emancipated themselves from a singularly degraded form of Polytheism, the First Principle of all things was believed to be within, not outside the universe. Whether it were Water, Fire, Air, or Earth each of the Ionians concurred with the other in believing the cause of all things was contained within some natural object; possibly identifying it with, and confining it to, this natural object, and thus degenerating into Materialism. Pythagoras and the Eleatics were a great advance upon the Ionians. The former plainly perceived the Unity of the universe, 'All comes from One,' he said. 'God embraces all, and actuates all, yet is but One, Take away every mode or condition, and there remains still the One Being which cannot be made either less or more than One.' The Eleatics almost resembled the Hindoos in the intense abstraction and spirituality of their philosophy. Xenophanes, in particular, represented himself as bewildered and perplexed in his endeavours to grasp that which he was conscious was beyond his grasp, but which he was no less conscious certainly existed.

'Withersoever I turn me,
I am lost in the One and the All.'

The chief doctrine of the Neo-Platonistic mystics equally with that of the Arabian Soufis was that the one object of every philosopher or theosopher should be absorption of the Deity. They could not worship a God who was apart from them. He must be within them. 'The highest truths were not to be reached by *study*, but by *transport*—by a transformation of the soul during *ecstasy*.'

Leaving these somewhat crude speculations of the early Greek philosophers, we made a lengthy stride and proceeded to the three martyrs of Modern Pantheism, Servetus, Bruno, and Vanini. Of these three, Bruno, from a singular power of clearness in expression, is, I think, for our purpose the best illustration to take. He perceived at once those two doctrines which may be called the principal characteristics of Pantheism, viz., That God acts from within, not from without, and that the Universe is One and Infinite. 'That which the Magians, Plato, Empedocles, and Plotinus call respectively the Impregnator, the Fabricator of the world, the Distinguisher, the Father or Progenitor, ought in reality to be called the Internal Artificer, seeing it forms the matter and the figure from within: from within the seed or the root, it gives forth or unfolds the stem; from within the stem, it forces out the boughs; from within the boughs, it forces out the branches; from within these, it pushes out the buds; from within it forms, shapes, and interlaces, as with nerves, the leaves, the flowers, the fruits; and from within, at appointed times, it recalls its moisture from the leaves and fruits to the branches, from the branches to the boughs, from the boughs to the stem, from the stem to the root. And there is a like method in the production of animals.' And concerning the Unity of the world, Bruno says: 'Every production, of whatever sort it be, is an alteration, the substance ever remaining the same, for that is only One, one Being divine, immortal.' 'Under-

stand, then, that all things are in the universe and the universe in all things; we in that, that in us; and so all meet in one perfect unity.' 'This One is eternal. Every appearance, every other thing, is vanity, is, as it were, nothing; yea, all that is nothing which is outside of this One.' With Vanini, who was burnt for maintaining that Nature was a faculty of God, we brought the First Volume to its close.

To the philosophy of Spinoza nearly a fourth part of the present volume was devoted, because we believed that any one who had thoroughly mastered and accepted the doctrines of Spinoza would have little difficulty in comprehending those of any other apostle of Pantheism: for the philosophy of Spinoza appears to us to be singularly clear and logical. It is difficult of comprehension, no doubt, to the careless reader, but it is not obscure to the attentive one. There is a vast difference between 'difficulty' and 'obscurity.' *Difficulty* only requires time and patience to be mastered. *Obscurity*, on the contrary, seems to increase into greater obscurity, the more time and patience are wasted upon it. Spinoza is an apt example of *difficulty*, Hegel of *obscurity*. Moreover, to understand Spinoza, and to make allowance for the somewhat unnecessarily difficult mathematical language in which he couched his philosophy, we must recollect the peculiar age in which he lived, and the important position mathematics at that period occupied. In the hands of Kepler and Galileo, and afterwards in those of Newton and Leibnitz, the higher analysis had wrung as it were, from Nature, secrets which before had been concluded to be wholly inaccessible; and since it had proved so successful in the region of physics it was not very unnatural it should be hoped it would prove equally successful in the region of metaphysics. God, himself, was frequently spoken of as the 'Great Geometrician.' As each new proposition in mathematics follows one that has gone before, this another that has preceded, and so on, so,

if the order and mutual relation of the universe of things and of mind be conceived mathematically, or as a system of sequences, the aggregate of these must lead back to a First, Unconditioned Cause of itself and all things else; and the universe then follows in the same way as mathematical truth follows from axioms. Thus the universe is not to be conceived as arising or beginning to be; it IS, and from eternity it WAS; and is consequently understood by Spinoza as both necessary and eternal. God, or the One and the All, beyond which nothing is or can be, must comprehend the universe of things within Himself. But God is the Infinite, the world is the finite, and finity consorts not with Infinity. Finite things, therefore, are no existences *per se*; they are realities only in so far as they are the varied expressions or forms of the changeless substance. In metaphysical language they are entitled Modes or Affections of Substance. And mode or affection is then defined to be that which is in something else, by which it is conceived (Ethics, Part I, Def. 5). All that is, therefore, is in God; and nothing is, nor can be conceived to be, without God, so that modes are to substance very much what waves are to the sea—appearances, on the face of reality; not things apart from it, but merged in it. Spinoza thus conceives God as the Immanent Cause and Essence of all things, and only acquiring self-consciousness, will, and understanding—or what we conceive as personality—in the universe of things at large, and in the mind of man in particular. As Immanent and Omnipresent Cause therefore, God is designated *Natura naturans*; as manifested in what we call creation, he is—*Natura naturata*. Nature, the Universe, is the power of God in outward act; and the power of God being the very essence of God, we arrive at the equation: God and Nature—God is cause, primordial and unconditioned; Nature is effect, conditioned manifestation of his power. Over all and in all, there is nothing outside of or beyond God. Were it otherwise, He would

not be what He is, the Infinite and Eternal. Despite the relatively backward state of science in his age, Spinoza had through the reasonings of philosophy arrived at that conception which is now proved to be a scientific fact, the Indestructibility of Matter. He was perfectly conscious that were a single particle of matter proved capable of annihilation, his whole theory must fall to the ground.

To Leibnitz, next in order of time though not in our mode of treatment, as to Berkeley, we devoted but a very few pages, inasmuch as we were conscious that more objection might be raised against our claiming these two as pantheists than against any others who have figured in this work. No doubt from Leibnitz, through that habit of his of 'striking fire from every pebble,' quite as many if not more passages might be cited from his works to show that he believed in an extra-mundane Creator, as that he believed in an immanent pervading Power. Nevertheless, as we have already quoted, he emphatically declares 'that the *Infinite* is not a modification, it is the Absolute; on the contrary, so soon as we introduce modifications, we limit ourselves, or form a *finite*;' and he explicitly rejects the dualistic doctrine of Descartes. With Berkeley also it must be admitted that, though from the passages we selected from his works, as a philosopher he may not unfairly be reckoned among the Pantheists, nevertheless as a theologian he must necessarily have believed in a dualistic interpretation of the universe: an Eternal Creator on the one hand, and a perishable universe on the other; and thus have contradicted the form of Pantheism with which this book has been occupied, which expressly denies a dualistic interpretation of the universe. Nevertheless, when he could shake himself free from the trammels of theology, we do not think we have altogether erred in claiming him among the pantheists.

To Fichte, as the noblest, and to our mind, the most comprehensible of the Transcendentalists, a considerable

space was devoted. There is nothing equivocal in his philosophy; and in claiming him amongst the pantheists, we do not run the risk we ran in claiming Leibnitz and Berkeley. The pantheism of Fichte was fully as pronounced as that of Spinoza; albeit it may be his intense idealism has clothed it with an unnecessarily mystical character not to be found in the earlier and clearer philosopher. The more spiritual Pantheism could not have a better exponent than Fichte's 'Doctrine of Religion:'—'Although it may be it is God Himself who lives behind every variety of form, yet we see Him not, but only His garment; we see Him as stone, plant, animal; or if we soar higher, as Natural Law, or as Moral Law: but all this is not yet He. The form for ever veils the substance from us; our vision itself conceals its object; our eye stands in its own light.' The nearest conception of what the Infinite could be, and the only conception to which the human mind could attain, was, in the opinion of Fichte, that of a holy and sublime Will, displaying itself alike in every form and mode of Nature. No one could be more earnest than he was in his repudiation of anthropomorphism. He believes in a moral order, but will not admit for a moment that the Infinite can be comprised within the finite. And in that early essay which brought upon him such persecution, he emphatically expresses his opinions upon this subject in the following words: Hence it is an error to say, that it is doubtful whether or not there is a God. It is not doubtful, but the most certain of all certainties,—nay, the foundation of all other certainties—the one absolute valid objective truth—that there is a moral order in the world. . . . On the other hand, no one who reflects a moment, and honestly avows the result of his reflection, can remain in doubt that the conception of God as a *particular substance* is impossible and contradictory: and it is right candidly to say this, and to silence the babbling of the schools, in order that the true religion of cheerful

virtue may be established in its room.' Schopenhauer, too, though he differed as darkness differs from light in his definition of what this Will was, agreed with Fichte in resolving the whole of the Universe into One, and in believing that the nearest conception the human mind could attain of this One was that of an Infinite and Æternal Will. 'Others have asserted the Will's freedom. I prove its omnipotence:' 'My age, after the teaching of Bruno, Spinoza and Schelling, had perfectly understood that all things are but One: but the nature of this Unity and the rationale of its appearance as Plurality were reserved for me to explain.'

Finally, we dwelt somewhat at length upon the corroboration the doctrine of Pantheism receives from the modern discoveries of Science. We showed that from the time of the Vedic writers up to that of our most modern philosophers, there had been a growing belief in God as the One Universal Existence whose outward manifestation displays itself through all phenomena; and that what Philosophy had for thousands of years persistently asserted, Science was at last beginning to verify. The doctrines of the Indestructibility of Matter and Conservation of Force alike prove that Existence has been and must ever be invariable in its quantity and substance, changing only in its form. We have so recently touched upon this part of our subject, that there is little need for recapitulation. We have but to repeat that Pantheism seems the necessary outcome of these discoveries; for we can no more think of phenomena without postulating a Noumenon than we can think of a known without an unknown. The one is a postulate of the other. Man is forced by logical necessity to acknowledge the existence of this Noumenon, even though he admit his inability to comprehend it. His truest wisdom lies in humbly avowing his own incompetence. For ages past men have in vain endeavoured to grasp that which is beyond their grasp. At times this

Noumenon has received the name of Will; at others of Intelligence; Subject; Object; Reality; and so long as these names are acknowledged to be but names, algebraical symbols, as it were, they can be allowed to stand. But deep down in the hearts of earnest men lies a feeling that all names are inadequate for that which is unnameable. Alike in the *Aditi* and *Daksha* of the Orientals, as in the *Unknown God* of the Greeks; in Hooker's assertion, that 'our soundest knowledge of God is to know that we know Him not as indeed He is, neither can know Him, and that our safest eloquence concerning Him is our silence;'[1] up to the prohibitions of our modern thinkers against the indulgence of anthropomorphism, there has been a repudiation of that shallow conception of God which would liken the Infinite to a finite man.

The object of this slight sketch has been to record the history of those philosophers who have from time to time risen above this unreasoning anthropomorphism, and who have, even at the risk of torture or the stake, manfully maintained their views. Differing though they did from one another in the outward forms of their philosophy, they were yet agreed in the one essential that to that extent asserted them to be pantheists, i.e., they believed that there was but One Universal Existence, whose outward manifestation took the form of the entire universe. They did not regard God as a person speaking to them from without, but as a Pervading, Omnipresent Power speaking to them from within. Alike in the incomprehensible power of the magnet, as in the equally incomprehensible power of gravitation, up to the whisper of the tenderest conscience, or the inspiration of the grandest genius, God was to them the All in All, the Root and Cause of all phenomenal being. No religion can in reality be so religious as this, because none other asserts so persistently the Omnipresence of God.

Yet at present Pantheism can scarcely be said to have

[1] Hooker, Book i. Chap. ii., sect. 3.

acquired a religious value; as yet it is little more than a philosophy; and the reason of it not taking its rank amongst the religions of the world lies, as we have stated in the Introductory Chapter of this Sketch, in the fact that it gives no explanation of the mystery of Evil, either in its origin or existence. If God is the noumenon of every phenomenon, then in consistency we must acknowledge Him to be the noumenon of every evil under the sun. But to acknowledge this is to enunciate a statement which is essentially irreligious. 'It is better,' as Bacon has told us 'to have no opinion of God at all, than such an opinion as is unworthy of Him; for the One is unbelief, the other is contumely.' Evil is the one foul blot that prevents the doctrine of Pantheism acquiring the sacredness of a religion. It is equally the one foul blot that prevents every other religion from possessing any logical consistency. Yet Pantheism has this one advantage over other religions:—none other has so unreservedly admitted the vast interval that lies between the finite and the Infinite; none other has so persistently refused to make the dealings and judgments of man a criterion of the dealings and judgments of God; none other is so conscious of the impossibility of gauging the purpose or intention of God. Yet one thing seems to be clear;—that Evil is decreasing, while Good is increasing; that though the individual sinner may occasionally prosper, sin in the long run is sure to fail. It is now a received assertion of Science that he who is capable and worthy is more likely to survive and leave offspring who will inherit the parental tendencies than he who is incapable and unworthy. This assertion taken in conjunction with the undoubted fact, that the nineteenth century contains less misery and sin than the savage ages of barbarism, make it not impossible for us to believe, with one or two of our modern philosophers, that in reality evil is but disguised good. True, actually speaking we have no right to pronounce this to be the case; still less right have we to pro-

nounce it not to be the case. Actually speaking, we know nothing at all about the matter. Theoretically speaking, however, there is so much beauty and harmony in the universe; so much progressive good, so much lessening evil, that we may not unfairly obey the precept of Fichte, call in the aid of Faith where we can no longer see, and *believe* that in some way or other, utterly incomprehensible to us now, Evil is necessary for the full perfection of Good.

Yet it must not be forgotten to be remarked that such a doctrine (beautiful though to some extent it undoubtedly is) carries with it a special danger of its own. In explaining and softening away the mystery of this existence of Evil, we are apt to explain away its vileness. It has long been the reproach of Pantheism that it is liable to confuse Evil with Good. That such is not the intention of this book, need scarcely be said. Better a hundred times have intellectual doubts concerning the nature of God; nay, better even to disbelieve in Him altogether, than for a moment to lose our loathing and aversion to sin. Whether evil will ultimately lead to good or no, nothing can lessen the certainty of the existence of evil now. Ingratitude, treachery, cruelty, and malice are crimes too revolting to be softened away; to say nothing of the still more loathsome—though possibly not more intrinsically wicked—deeds of impurity and obscenity that still degrade our larger cities. However hopeful we may be as to the future of the universe; however reverent may be our admiration of its beauties and wonders, we must never forget that Evil is still an evil, too real to be explained away; our only chance of escape from it being in our determination to grapple with it directly we perceive it in ourselves; if possible, whenever we perceive it in others also.

And now our task is done. Of the Philosophy of Pantheism, we have necessarily said very little. Our business has been with its history, not with its philosophy. Our object has been to give some slight account of the various

thinkers who from the earliest ages up to our own time, have rebelled against the teaching of anthropomorphism: who have believed in God as the One Universal Existence, and who have taught that He acts from within as a Pervading Omnipresent Power, not from without as an anthropomorphic Person. That many omissions will be found in this work, no one is more conscious than is its own author; but it has not aspired to be considered an exhaustive treatise, only an inadequate sketch. And as such it commends itself to the indulgence of its readers.

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